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TOP TWO CONTINUE ON THEIR WAY

By Daniel Kuziow

Perth Glory and the Olympic Sharks continued their assault on the National Soccer League after each side recorded home victories to extend their lead at the top to 11 and 13 points respectively over third placed South Melbourne.

Goals from Andre Gumprecht and Bobby Despotovski ensured the Glory overcame a spirited South Melbourne side in front of just over 11 000 fans at Perth Oval.

German midfielder Gumprecht gave the hosts the lead on 24 minutes when a long ball out of defence was chested down by striker Damian Mori to Gumprecht who took one touch before he fired a half volley home from the edge of the box.

Despotovski on as a substitute for Nick Mridja secured the three points for his side when he converted Mori's cross after South's defence had been carved open.

The Olympic Sharks meanwhile put two successive defeats behind them thanks to a single goal victory over the Football Kingz Ante Milicic scored his seventh goal of the season in the 68th minute when he sprung the offside trap and deftly chipped goalkeeper Michael Utting from 20 metres.

The victory while narrow, was enough to put the Sharks back on track and keep pace with the league leaders.

Adelaide City put an end to the Brisbane Strikers remarkable unbeaten run with a slender 1-nil victory over John Kosmina's side at Hindmarsh Oval.

Italian import Claudio Pelosi settled the match with a penalty strike four minutes before half time to end the Strikers run of seven games without defeat.

Young City goalkeeper David Scarsella ensured the Strikers remained goalless with a string of fine saves in the second half. He neatly saved a Steve Laybutt header and smothered a close range Anthony Roche shot and the win ensured Zoran Matic maintained his unbeaten run as caretaker coach.

On Friday night, the Northern Spirit moved off the bottom of the table after registering a one goal to nil victory over derby rivals Sydney United.

Noel Spencer broke the shackles of a dour affair in the 72nd minute, taking advantage of some sloppy work by United in their own half. The midfielder stole the ball in broken play, found himself in some space and eventually beat United keeper Vanja Ivesa from the edge of the box.

For United, Boris Pavic was dismissed eight minutes after the Spirit goal, when he collected his second yellow card for a spiteful tackle on youngster Jonathon Richter.

Dylan Macallister, who had been sitting on the sidelines waiting for his transfer to come through from Swiss club FC Aarau, made a composed debut in the midfield for the home side while former Wolves Sean Babic turned out for United for the first time.

Sunday's games saw the Parramatta Power travel to Melbourne and convincingly beat the Knights by four goals to nil, while the Wollongong Wolves had to settle for a two all draw with

Newcastle United.

Marconi sat out the weekend's play with the bye.

At Somers Street, the home side were jeered and booed off the field as two goals in either half kept the Power in the top half of the table while heaping further misery on the Andrew Marth-coached side.

Knights striker Anthony Pelikan had earned a penalty inside the first two minutes for his side, but botched his spot-kick and hit the post.

From there the visiting side dominated and John Buonavoglia opened the scoring on 14 minutes, then a defensive mix-up involving Rodrigo Vargas in the penalty area six minutes before halftime allowed Parramatta's Brad Maloney to nip in and score.

Buonavoglia added his second on 72 minutes and played a hand in giving returning striker Pablo Cardozo his goal and the Power's fourth.

In Wollongong, a last minute penalty robbed the Wolves of three precious points when Buddy Farah felled United striker Joel Griffiths.

Griffiths had given the Novacastrians the lead on six minutes, but Robbie Stanton equalised on the half-hour with a neat free kick.

The Wolves stole the lead with some 20 minutes remaining when Naum Sekulovski pounced on a goalkeeping error.

But the game was to end all even when Griffiths coolly stepped up to convert his own penalty.

Marconi sat out the weekend's play with the bye.



Smiles all round - Power strikers Pablo Cardozo (Left) & Johnny Buonavoglia (Right) celebrate their four-nil victory over the Melbourne Knights.

POSTECOGLOU POISED FOR YOUTH SUCCESS

By Mark Stavroulakis

Australian Youth coach Ange Postecoglou will endure a tough few months this year as both his U17 & U20 squads look towards consolidating a top spot in world youth football.

Recently, the Young Socceroos booked their ticket to Dubai in two months after recording an overwhelming fifteen-nil aggregate win over Pacific Island neighbours Fiji.

The 20-man squad has certainly grabbed many people's attention and as Ange stated to ABSW, the squad can only get better come World Cup time in March.

"Things went pretty well, I was really happy with the way the players went about doing their jobs even though we didn't have that much time in preparing for the qualifiers. Watching the players play as a team over a short-period was something that also caught my attention, but overall I was pleased with the squad's performance."

Now with the qualifiers well and truly over, the 29th of January will see the U20 World Cup draw announced in Abu Dhabi (UAE).



Eye on the prize: Australian Youth coach Ange Postecoglou will have his work cut out with both the U17&U20 squads this year.

The tournament itself kick's off on the 25 of March and runs until the 16th of April. Postecoglou has already stated that a training camp will be conducted during the month of February, adding some last minute touches before departing for Dubai.

"Obviously we are waiting for the draw at the end of this month but we are looking towards getting the squad together 10 days before the World Cup in a training camp and hoping to stage it in Perth."

At this present moment, the world looms large for a possible war in Iraq; something many people hope does not eventuate.

Dubai, the city of where the U20 World Cup will be held is rather close to Iraq, and if a full-scale war breaks out, the possibility of a venue change could happen.

"If anything does happen then I guess it's a FIFA decision as to whether Dubai is safe enough for the teams to travel to. We will keep on planning the squad as normal and get on with the job ahead of us."

Many lucky spectators that had the chance to witness the U20's in action whilst in Melbourne last year had a first-hand look at how many talented youngsters are coming through the Australian ranks.

(Continued on page 3)

GRADISCA TO BE BROUGHT DOWN UNDER

By Daniel Kuziow

Australia's rich vein of footballing talent will once again be on show after the launch last week of a qualifying series for the renowned Gradisca youth tournament.

Into its 18th year, Gradisca has had a long association with annually promoting the best under 17 youth talent from across all the major footballing continents. This year, U.S Itala San Marco have issued an invitation to Australian sides to conduct a qualification tournament during late January with the win-

ners to take their place in the competition proper in April.

Organisers have scheduled the Australian leg of the qualifying tournament to kick off in the twin cities of Sydney and Canberra between the dates of Tuesday 28 January and Thursday 30 January with the semi finals and final to be played on the weekend of the February 1 and 2.

The eight group competition comprising of sides from around Australia will play off in two pools of four teams. Pool A will be played at Marconi Stadium while Pool B is currently pencilled in to be played at Seiffert Oval in

Queanbeyan with the winners to represent the region of Oceania.

Patron for the Canberra Pool will be Mr Frank Pangallo, Mayor of Queanbeyan, who has agreed to a request that the Qualification Tournament shall be played for the Tony Pangallo Cup, in memory of Frank's son, Tony who lost his life in a motor vehicle accident two years ago.

Tony was a former prominent Canberra soccer identity and a member of the very first ACT Academy of Sport Soccer Program intake.

(Continued on page 2)

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F.L. Press
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TELEPHONE
(editorial and general enquiries)
Tel: (02) 9690 7159

(advertising)
John Economos
Tel: (02) 9744 6984
Ben Moring
Tel: 0438 849 053
or
Tel: (02) 9690 7159

E-MAIL
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)

ABSW's E-mail:
soccer@foreignlanguage.com.au

FACSIMILE
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)
(02) 9310 4425

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SUBSCRIPTIONS
Sylvia Marinos
Phone: (02) 9690 7100
Australia: \$195 (GST incl.)
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EDITOR
Mark Stavroulakis
STAFF WRITER
Daniel Kuziow

LAYOUT/TYPESSETTING
Mary Quartly, Alamita Vea
PICTURE EDITOR
Carlos Furtado

CORRESPONDENTS
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Alan Clark (Melbourne)
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DISTRIBUTION
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AUSSIES ABROAD

BY DANIEL KUZIW

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Early this week, with the
Lillestrom agreed a fee with
Moss for Australian midfielder
Kasey Wehrman.

Earlier the club had decided
not to pursue their interest in the
21-year-old last month, but have
now changed their minds and
made a bid for the star.

"We have agreed with Moss,
but it's the total package that
mean something for us," said
LSK leader Per Mathisen to VG
Nett.

"If we not get the deal sorted
soon, we may look for other alter-
natives."

But only days later Wehrman
snubbed the offer calling
Lillestrom's contract "an insult".

Wehrman, whose club Moss
were relegated from the top flight
at the end of last season, turned
down an annual salary of £60,000
- insisting that he is on a similar
deal at the Mellos Stadium.

"Lillestrom couldn't offer me
higher wages than I am earning in
Moss. That is an insult," he told
Norwegian newspaper Romerikes
Blad.



Kasey Wehrman: Livid with
the Lillestrom's current
transfer offer.

"Lillestrom have been serious
about my transfer but I don't con-
sider their offer as serious."

Wehrman has 18 months
remaining on his contract and is
determined to see it through so he
can leave on a free transfer, even
though it could ruin his interna-
tional chances.



James Beattie: Touted by Mark Schwarzer as the best
striker in the English Premier League.

★★★★

Mark Schwarzer has
lavished praise on
Southampton's in form striker
James Beattie, adding his voice
to the growing list calling for
the frontman to be given a
chance with England.

The Australian keeper got a
first-hand view of Beattie's strik-
ing prowess at the weekend, and
after watching the Saints star beat
him with two spectacular efforts,
Schwarzer is adamant that Beattie
has the quality to flourish at inter-
national level.

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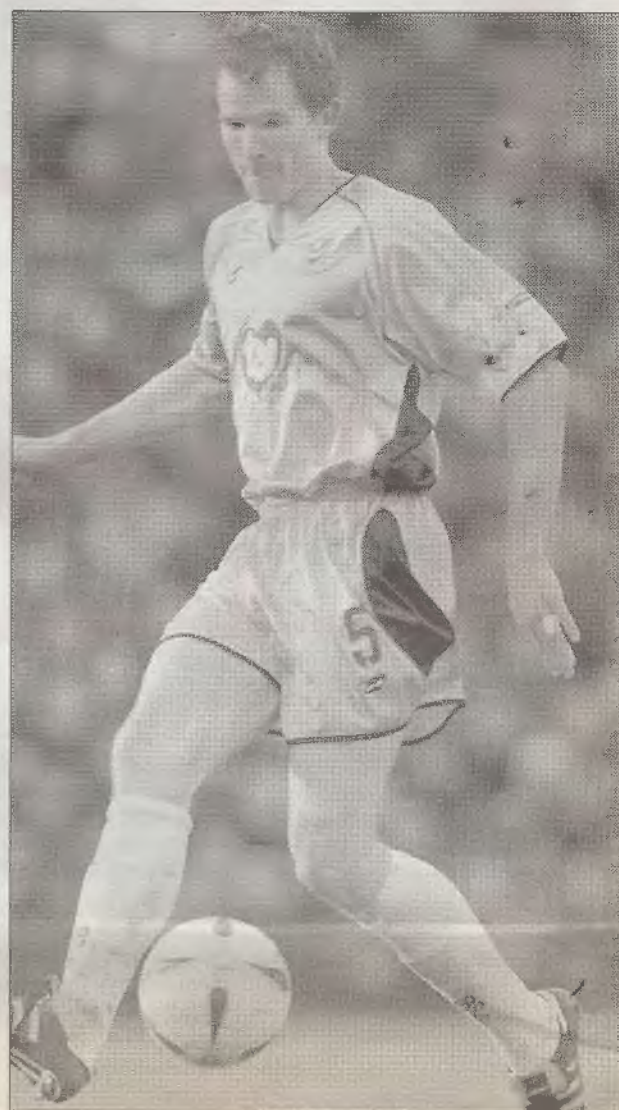
"Beattie, in my opinion, ranks
as No1 in the Premiership at the
moment — together with
Shearer," stated the Australian
custodian.

"It won't surprise me if we see
him in the England squad and,
possibly, even the team at Upton
Park.

"His (Beattie's) work-rate is
phenomenal.

"He gets in superb positions all
the time and this Southampton
team, playing the way they are,
give him an extremely good
service.

"James pulled out two finishes
here that were sheer quality and
underlined that his confidence is
sky-high.



Hayden Foxe: Portsmouth coach Harry Redknapp has
blasted the Australian following his error against
Sheffield United.

Foxe after the Australian's
blunder three minutes from
time cost the division one lead-
ers a home draw against rivals
Sheffield Wednesday.

With the scores locked togeth-
er at 1-1 after a late Portsmouth
equaliser, Foxe failed to head the
ball clear from his goal area, giv-
ing Sheffield's Michael Brown a
clear shot from 12 metres out to
snatch the win.

Redknapp, who fought a
lengthy battle with British immi-
gration officials two years ago to
bring Foxe to his then club West
Ham, was livid at the error.

"It was criminal we didn't win
it," Redknapp said.

"It was a diabolical bit of
defending by us. Someone tried
to be clever instead of heading

the ball out and that cost us the
game.

"I thought we pinned them
down in the second half.

Once we equalised, there was
only going to be one winner until
that mistake."

★★★★

A have received early
Areports the South
Melbourne midfielder Massimo
Murdocca will move to Everton
after the finals of the Under 20
youth tournament.

Murdocca has been a regular in
the South outfit so far this season
and has reportedly attracted atten-
tion from the rejuvenated Premier-
League side.

Gradisca To Be Brought Down Under

(Continued from front page)

Present at the launch last
Wednesday were many of the
soccer fraternity including
Soccer Australia chairman
Remo Nogorotto and National
coach Frank Farina.

Nogorotto already akin to the
tournament after seeing it two
years ago is extremely positive
about the initiative to hold a
qualifying series in Australia.

Farina meanwhile recognised

the competition as the ideal
opportunity for young players to
promote their talents on a world
stage.

The Gradisca tournament has
grown from humble beginnings
and is now regarded as a pre-
mier youth footballing festival.

The enduring persistence of
founder Lorenzo Pastrello has
seen Gradisca now recognized
at the highest level with patron-
age from the Italian Soccer
Federation — the Federazione

Lega Calcio, UEFA and FIFA.
This year due to the great suc-
cess of this tournament the
Italian national television net-
work Rai International will tele-
cast live the opening and final
game.

Past winners of the tourna-
ment include the likes of
Argentinos Juniores of
Argentina, Lazio and AC Milan
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and Cruzeiro of Brazil.



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(Continued: Postecoglou Poised for Youth Success)

The Inter Milan duo of Carl Valeri & keeper Nathan Coe. Skipper Scotty McDonald from Southampton and the National League talents of Alex Brosque (Marconi Stallions), Michael Baird (South Melbourne), David Tarka (Perth Glory), Matthew McKay (Brisbane Strikers) & Dustin Wells (Wollongong Wolves) to name a few.

Postecoglou believes that the current squad has no individual standout players but the team on a whole is one for the future.

"I was quite happy as I stated earlier on how the whole team went, not just in terms of the way they played but the way they gelled as a unit and the results showed that.

Just about everyone played well so to say anyone stood out wouldn't be fair to the other boys. At the end of the day I truly wanted to make sure we did well as a unit, and as I said as a group, they worked fairly well from training, to the way they conducted themselves and that was the most important aspect for me."

Asked about whether any

changes would be made to the 20-man squad, Ange replied: "There won't be a lot of changes but there will be some on the cards. There are some players that are on the fringe that were a little bit unlucky to miss out on the qualifiers and there were a couple of positions that maybe we were a little bit light on. I'll be looking at a couple of players and it will all depend on the

place in the squad."

Away from the U20 scene, the young U17 Joeys side is also on the verge of being selected as the squad prepares for its Oceania qualifiers in February.

Being held in chilly Finland in August (13th-30th), the Joeys are hoping to emulate the success of the '99 squad that came runners up to Brazil in New Zealand.



The current U20 Young Socceroo squad.

players form leading up to it.

As far as all the players are concerned, if they play well for their clubs, keep up a consistent form with them, then that should determine the overall result of a

Postecoglou has made a decision that this week will see the young names unearthed for the U17 side.

"I'll probably select the squad this week or next and we

will go into camp a week before the qualifiers in February which I'm really looking forward to. We have been placed in a tough group with New Zealand, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, which I know will all prove to be tough customers. The U17's have the potential to be a good team but it will all depend on how the players gel and get together as a unit."

Coming off contract at the end of this year, the former South Melbourne coach will not

be accompanying the Socceroos in England come February as his focus will be on guiding both youth squads on the right path.

"No I won't be going to the England game as my priority this year is with the U17 & U20's, it's a big year for the young boys and I really want to concentrate on both World Cups.

Frank and Graham Arnold have both got the seniors and that's their jobs which are pretty important to them, so wherever I can, I'll try and help out but I think this year is a really important year for the young boys so I'll be concentrating on them.

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ROOS GRUDGE MATCH?

A full-strength Socceroos could face their 2002 World Cup qualifying nemesis Uruguay at the MCG in June if a proposed tour by the South Americans is given the green light.

The Victorian Major Events Company confirmed that a promoter had contacted it about the possibility of planning a re-match.

"We're aware of a planned tour by Uruguay in June and we would be interested in a game here (in Melbourne), but nothing formal has been proposed at this stage and we've referred the promoter to Soccer Australia," a company source told the *Herald Sun*.

A Soccer Australia (SA) board meeting in Sydney on the weekend discussed the possibility of a two-match tour by Uruguay on the same day that it set-up a sub-committee to deal with Australia's international program leading up to the 2006 World Cup.

Aussie national team boss Frank Farina — who is on that sub-committee — admitted on



A friendly match against Uruguay is currently on the cards for the Socceroos in June.

SBS' TheWorld Game Show that FIFA's decision to award Oceania direct entry to Germany 2006 forced (SA) to rethink its plans for an international schedule for the Socceroos.

"We've got to wait and see what the qualification process will be," Farina said.

"Until Oceania gives us a decision, it's difficult to put a program in place. Because that decision in Madrid changed our program... the one that we were

trying to get up and running."

SA is hoping to confirm the Socceroos' long-term program by the end of January with the England friendly on February 12 presently the only confirmed match.

The Australian's have been sounded out for other friendlies with Yugoslavia interested in hosting a match in Belgrade in March as well as matches against Mexico in New York and Nigeria in London.

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SOCCEROOS SING OKON'S PRAISES

Socceroos coach Frank Farina has given his strongest indication yet that Paul Okon will lead Australia in next month's friendly against England.

The classy midfielder's future at the helm of the Socceroos has been the source of constant speculation following his stagnant start to the season at Leeds.

However, in recent weeks the 30-year-old has enjoyed a form revival at the Yorkshire club and that's likely to mean he once again wears the captain's armband when the Socceroos meet England at London's Upton Park on February 12.

"At this stage there's no reason why he won't be there," Farina said.

"He was never in doubt in my mind, I have never said that Paul Okon was out of the squad."

"When Okon plays well, I think teams play well. The unlucky thing for Paul is that he's had a lot

of injuries.

"But I have been one of his biggest supporters. I think he's a wonderful player."

As for the captaincy, Farina said if Okon was selected, he would lead the side.

"If Okon is in the 18, he'll be captain," he said.

Okon has been a revelation since forcing his way into the Leeds squad.

The club has won four of its past six Premier League games and moved clear of the relegation zone.

Norwegian international Eirik Bakke became the latest teammate to sing his praises after a 2-0 win over Scunthorpe in the FA Cup.

"With Paul Okon playing ... the team has a better balance and that allows me to make forward runs," Bakke said on www.lufc.com.

"It gives us more options going forward and then the chances come as well."

"Paul does not let much get past



Paul Okon: Socceroo star doing well for Leeds United.

him and apart from that we are playing much better as a team now."

Farina did admit there would be some surprises in the Socceroos' 18-man squad, which will be named in the next fortnight.

Former Wollongong midfielder Scott Chipperfield, now with Basel in Switzerland, and fellow midfielder Vince Grella (Empoli) are certain to be part of Farina's line-up.

Ajax goalkeeper Joey Didulica is likely to back-up Mark Schwarzer, while Blackburn defender Lucas Neill will be selected after impressing in the Premier League.

The squad will be devoid of locally-based players.

The match shapes as one of the biggest England friendlies in recent memory, with tickets selling out at a cracking pace.

The Socceroos will enter the game with high expectations, with several of Farina's big guns strik-

ing ominous form at just the right time, including Okon's Leeds teammate Mark Viduka.

Viduka scored from the penalty spot in Leeds' FA Cup win over Scunthorpe United, his second goal in as many games since regaining full fitness after a shoulder injury.

"I think he's been the biggest turnaround along with Okon," Farina said of Viduka.

"He's class. He could play in any team in the world. I am hoping by the time February 12 comes around he's still in the form he is in (now)."

However, Farina warned against expecting too much, with the national coach given only a handful of training sessions with his side before the game.

The complete squad is expected to gather only three days before the match, with several players having to meet club commitments before entering camp.

FARINA EYES ENGLAND

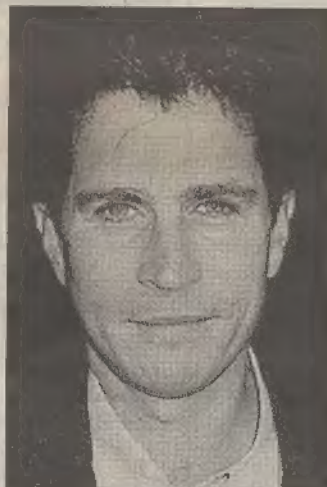
Socceroos coach Frank Farina says that Australia's matchup against England next month is the first step towards qualifying for the 2006 World Cup.

In an exclusive interview with SBS Head of Sport Les Murray on TheWorldGame program, Farina said that he has already selected his squad of 18, hinting that young players will be blooded in the friendly.

"It's a great opportunity for us, we want to get a result," Farina said. "I think it's important for the national team."

"We've got to pick our best team, we're only taking 18 players but hopefully we'll be able to bring a few of the younger ones in as well. But definitely it's also the start of our 2006 preparation."

"The squad will be announced most probably in the next weeks. I've already settled on a squad of 18."



Socceroo coach Frank Farina has billed next month's friendly match against England as a crucial step towards preparations for qualifying for the 2006 World Cup.

Farina also addressed the issue of players not being released by their European clubs to play for Australia, saying that he will be strict on any absences.

"Basically the rule will be, every squad that is announced, I would expect every player to be there. There will be no excuses."

"At the end of the day if we have players who don't want to be part of it, that's not my decision. If players refuse to turn up (whoever the player may be) then I'm sure they know what the consequences will be."

Farina also revealed that FIFA's decision to award Oceania direct entry to the 2006 World Cup has forced Soccer Australia to rethink its plans for an international schedule for the Socceroos.

By the time the Socceroos take to the Upton Park pitch on February 12, it will have been well over a year

since a full-strength Australian team has been assembled.

"We've got to wait and see what the qualification process will be," Farina said. "Until Oceania gives us a decision, it's difficult to put a program in place. Because that decision in Madrid changed our program... the one that we were trying to get up and running."

Farina also had some words of encouragement for Australia's top young stars, many of whom he will be hoping to lead to the 2004 Athens Olympics as well as introducing some to the full Australian setup.

"We will be introducing players, young players coming through, especially from the 20's and the 23's, which I think we have to do if we're going to build for the future," he said. "But the nucleus or the core of the side will always be there for every game."

Kewell Australia's Beckham: Tiatto

Socceroo defender Danny Tiatto has described Harry Kewell as the "David Beckham of Australia" ahead of next month's friendly against England.

Tiatto, currently sidelined with a muscle tear, has also poured cold water on talk of a rift between Kewell and his Leeds and Australian teammate Mark Viduka.

The 29-year-old said the rumours were blown out of proportion and things couldn't be any happier in the Socceroo ranks.

"It was all just rumours about a rift between them," Tiatto said.

"Everyone in the squad gets along fine and they get along well together."

"They were rumours which were blown out of proportion, both are really nice guys."

Kewell and Beckham could directly oppose each other in next month's friendly depending on the tactics adopted by Frank Farina and Sven Goran Eriksson, the respective coaches of Australia and England.

Kewell has been playing alongside Viduka for Leeds and could embrace a similar forward role with Australia, although he may yet be given a licence to roam.

Farina's other option is to play him on the left hand side, where he made his name with Leeds.

That would pitchfork Kewell into a likely head-to-head clash with Beckham.

The Manchester United star plays on the right hand side with his club, although he has been known to adopt a more central role with the national side.

"Harry is like the David

Beckham of Australia and is one of our better players and is doing so well here," Tiatto said.

"He is well known back home and is a very good player."

Tiatto has also given England a warning of the potent combination Kewell and Viduka present now they are playing in tandem at Leeds.

The pair have been at the heart of the club's mid-season revival, which has taken Leeds clear of the relegation zone.

And together they are likely to prove England's biggest headache on February 12.

"They are both very good players," Tiatto said.

"Mark holds the ball up well and he is very strong and is great in the air."



Harry Kewell - The 'David Beckham' of Australia.

"Harry is a big threat as well and together are a good strike force for Leeds."

As for Tiatto, he is optimistic he can make it back for the match at Upton Park.

"If I will be involved here and if I do come through the game against Manchester United on February 9th then if my fitness is okay and I have no knocks or don't feel sore then hopefully I will be with the Australia squad."

SYDNEY UNITED & NEWCASTLE COP FINES

Soccer Australia came to the conclusion of solving the recent crowd trouble that occurred during the Newcastle United - Sydney United clash in Round 14.

The National Soccer League established a Committee of Inquiry to make recommendations to the Board of Soccer Australia relating to the incidents, with both Newcastle United and Sydney United present at this inquiry.

After considering the Committee of Inquiry findings, the Board of Soccer Australia determined that Sydney United, whose supporters had been deemed to instigate the disturbance, had brought the game into

disrepute and resolved:

A) That Sydney United be fined \$40,000, inclusive of which \$25,000 is suspended by way of Bank Guarantee for a period of two (2)



years, with automatic loss of this amount, in addition to any penalty imposed at such time, for a repeat incident of similar nature.

B) That Sydney United take all steps to ban all identified offenders.

C) That Sydney United assist all other NSL clubs in ensuring the ban is effective at all grounds.

D) That the NSL monitor Sydney United to ensure that undertakings the club has provided to police to identify offenders are carried through, as are efforts by the club to prevent further occurrences.

The Board of Soccer Australia also determined that Newcastle United be fined \$2,500 for having brought the game into disrepute.

In addition the Board determined that all clubs be required to undertake random bag searches as part of further security checks at NSL matches.

(Sydney United respond to crowd disturbances - See page 8).



Friendly? What Friendly?

Sven-Goran Eriksson is about to learn just how sporting tussles between England and Australia can never be classified as 'friendly'.

That is the view of Australia coach Frank Farina who has warned Eriksson that he will send his team into next month's match between the teams at Upton Park with orders to shirk no challenges.

He fired a second shot in the pre-match psychological battle by insisting such high-profile matches are no place for international football novices and promising to field his strongest team available, even though England could bring in players for debuts.

Although it is scheduled as a non-competitive fixture, and even though he makes England favourites, Farina expects his players to throw themselves into full-blooded action in London.

"It is a unique opportunity for us, for me as a coach and the team," said Farina in his column on Soccer Australia's official website.

"And although it is a friendly, it is not a friendly."

"I also think the traditional rivalry between the two countries in sport generally, will see a lot of pressure on the players to do well and play well."

Farina's Australia just missed out on a place in last summer's World Cup - losing in a play-off to Uruguay, but FIFA's decision to hand an automatic place at future finals to the Oceania region has boosted morale in the Socceroos camp.

Delighted at the chance to take on England, which he describes as "an enormous pat on the back for Australian soc-

cer", Farina believes all the rivalry that has characterised Ashes cricket and rugby Tests over the years will resurface on the football field.

"My expectations are that we will be competitive and on any given day, I think, with the quality players we have, we can win," he continued.

"But when talking about expectations, there is a lot of things to consider."

"This will be the squad's first time

together in 12 months. I may look at changing the way we play, purely and simply because of the way England play."

Farina revealed his admiration for England's current team and admitted his charges would be up against it.

"The interesting thing I have been hearing over the past few weeks is the expectations of Australia beating England; it's actually quite funny," he explained.

"I find that people are honestly believing that we are going to go over there and beat England, but I think we have to put it into perspective and I think we have to keep our feet on the ground."

"It is going to be a great test for our players and it is going to be a pressure situation against one of the best teams going around."

"They (England) made the quarter-finals of the last World Cup, they are in

the midst of their European Championship qualifiers and they have some world-class players."

Farina will not have his squad together until the Monday before the Wednesday matchday on February 12, so he has urged Australian supporters to keep their hopes realistic.

"I would just urge people to keep their feet on the ground and don't let their expectations get too high because it is a tough one, but it is great for the team and Australian soccer in general," he added.

Although England are expected to experiment in the match, with Southampton's James Beattie and Liverpool's Chris Kirkland among the uncapped players tipped for call-ups, Farina is relishing the chance to work with his first-choice side and will resist the temptation to blood youngsters.

"I had heard suggestions from some quarters that we should be bringing in young players, well I disagree," he said.

"We will be playing our best side, simple as that."

"You are not talking about results, but you are talking about preparing for 2006 and whilst there may be players who some are saying are too old and won't be there in 2006, you don't just throw in young players for the sake of throwing in young players."

"The young players will get their opportunities, but it will always be centred on getting a result and preparing a team for 2006."

"I will be picking our best available squad. That is what football is all about in matches like this."



Ready for battle: Frank Farina's Socceroos are ready for the English showdown in February.

WILL ACEVSKI BE THE ACE IN THE FORCE PACK?

By Allan Crisp

Loupe (Louie) Acevski unwittingly stirred a hornets nest among the Adelaide City fans when he arrived from Northern Spirit to join the Force last week.

Reaction to the signing of the new goalkeeper ranged from shock, dismay to bewilderment as supporters debated the reasoning behind calling up another custodian when City already has David Scarsella, Daniel Godley and Ian Martin.

News that City had intentions to sign Acevski surfaced months ago, but most assumed the deal had gone cold when nothing eventuated.

However, the Force obviously was waiting for the window of transfer regulations to reopen before bringing its recruit to Adelaide.

When Acevski touched down here, Force coach Zoran Matic was quick to assure the public that the former Spirit reserve goalkeeper would need to earn a place in the NSL starting line-up.

Acevski agreed he would have a fight on his hands to take over from current first choice goalkeeper Scarsella.

Meanwhile, a feeling of unease surrounded the sup-

porters of Godley and Martin, who deduced that the future of those players at NSL level with City was in question.

Martin began the current season as the top-flight glove-man, when he gained three starting berths and had one appearance as a substitute before being replaced by Godley.



Lou Acevski: Gunning for Adelaide's number one spot under the sticks.

The latter was chosen for five matches to bring his overall tally of NSL appearances to 14.

Scarsella, 20, was then given his chance, which he grabbed with both gloves, making an outstanding debut that earned him high praise

and won him hordes of fans.

It is those supporters who see Scarsella as the heir apparent to former City champion goalkeepers, like Willie McNally, Peter Marshall, Bobby Ferguson, Robert Zabica and Jason Petkovic, who were shocked by the signing of Acevski.

Acevski, they pointed out, was merely the second choice goalkeeper behind Paul Henderson at Northern Spirit and had not played a game this season.

Twenty-five years old Acevski, however, played 11 matches for Spirit last season after racking up 35 appearances in goal for the Melbourne Knights.

He played a significant part for the Knights in the 2000-01 season when they reached the second round of the NSL finals.

A former St Albans and Preston player in Victoria, Acevski was signed by the then Knights coach Vlado Vanis in 1999.

Sentiment aside, Acevski has a huge experience advantage over the present City trio of goalkeepers.

The challenge facing Acevski will not only be to keep well, but to appease the disgruntled fans, who prefer Scarsella, Godley or Martin as their goalkeeping hero.

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My name is Sam Cohen, a hair loss and hair replacement specialist for more than 32 years. Using prescribed topical and oral pharmaceutical products and herbal preparations, I have helped thousands of men, women and children with genetic baldness re-grow their own natural hair back. Solved many hair & scalp problems, such as, itchy scalp, dry or oily hair. Custom designed the most versatile and natural looking 'Hairpieces', improved 'Hair Implantation' procedures and advised and consulted on all types of 'Hair Transplants'. With my knowledge and practical experience, I can achieve great results for you, provided you act soon. The DHT affected dormant hair roots do not stay alive longer than 4 years. Free on-going advice is also included with all our programs.

Most organisations will have you spending thousands of dollars with recurring cost for unnecessary cosmetic products, office treatments, mineral hair analysis, lasers, etc. An important part of their guarantee is that you attend their premises on a regular basis to enable them to keep a grip on you and your money. Not so with IHRB, you pay far less and it can be conducted in the privacy, convenience and comfort of your own home. Further, those who do not or are not able to visit our clinic, need not worry. We will send you a questionnaire with all the relevant information and instructions explaining the cause and how the treatment works.

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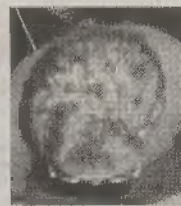
Dear Sam,
I have tried many hair treatments over the last few years including well known prescription and non-prescription topical solutions and Chinese herbal remedies but none of these helped with my hair loss. Since using your hair treatment over the last three months, I'm astounded at the amount of hair regrowth that is now evident not only to me but to others including my doctor who I have been seeing for many years. I recommended Sam's products to anyone who like me thought they were destined for a life of ever increasing baldness.
Thank you Sam.

Yours Truly
Steve James

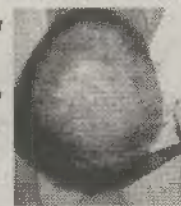
Dear Sam,
Three years ago you advised me on the way my hair was and how rapid my hair loss would become. I ignored your advice denying I was shedding hair. Two and a half years later you were correct. My girlfriend and I thought we should do something so I came to see you and you were more than happy to help me with your treatment. Still only three months into the treatment the improvement is dramatic. My hair feels thicker with more density and close friends often comment on how it looks to be growing back. My girlfriend is especially happy with how it is looking. I thank you undoubtedly and do not hesitate to recommend you to any person who is concerned about their hair loss. You are a genius.
Yours Thankfully
Leo Clarke



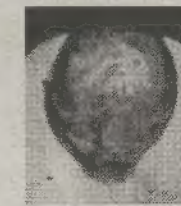
Before



After 3 months





Before



After 3 months

National League Round 18 Reports

	Perth Glory	2
	South Melbourne	0

By Richard Kreider

There would not have been too many of the season's second highest attendance to leave Perth Oval disappointed last Saturday night following a gripping and top quality encounter between the league leaders Perth Glory and third placed South Melbourne.

The 2-0 victory in favour of the Glory in their 100th league match at home reversed the same score-line from the away leg that went in favour of the Melbourne side back in October and has enabled the Perth club to preserve their spot since the Sharks secured their home fixture against the Football Kingz on the same night.

"The standard of play from both teams was really quite high," said Glory boss Mich d'Avray. Even the conquered coach Danny Wright agreed the contest was of a high grade. "We're obviously disappointed with the result but we

were under no illusions when we came here that it going to be a tough ask," he said. "However, I still think the boys can hold their heads high after putting on a pretty good show."

"Had Buljan's shot got in and not hit the bar things it might have been different, plus we had a lot of possession in the second-half but they (Glory) defended really well," said Wright.

After making a blunt comment to the press mid-week about the Perth team not having the front-line competence to find the net, Wright was left eating humble pie on Saturday night.

"If I helped to get a couple of hundred more people through the turnstiles then I did my job," he quipped.

Another of the positives to come from Perth's win was the return to form of Bobby Despotovski, who gave the Glory firing line a much more powerful dimension to their offensive play.

His vision and quality passing that had lost its lustre over the past weeks because of both injury and a lack of passion looks to have returned.

"He has been looking sharp all week at training but I had to be fair to Nick Mrdja who scored the winner last week and so was a given another opportunity," said d'Avray.

The game began at a blistering and at times physical tempo although neither side could claim the ascendancy.

The first real opportunity to threaten a goal came in the 21st minute when Brad Hassell nodded a deep Scott Miller corner back across goal to Nick Mrdja who headed wide of the target.

Three minutes later, Glory opened the scoring with one of the best goals of the season, which started from a speedy right-side counter-attack with Shane Pryce. The tall defender then pushed the ball to Damian Mori on the face of

the South Melbourne box, where the lethal forward chested the ball to the feet of Andre Gumprecht and who fired a sweetly-taken half-volley past Eugene Galekovic.

It was a goal worthy of the contest on show and as expected inspired the Melbourne side to lift their game. Former Glory forward Peter Buljan had the best equalising chance of the half ten minutes later when after leaving Jamie Harnwell marooned 30 metres from goal, he looked up and drilled a rising strike that suddenly dipped onto the front of the crossbar.

The remainder of the half was in an end-to-end trend, with Matt Horsley causing problems in the 36th minute before strong and justified penalty claims were ignored by referee Perry Mur when Scott Miller felled Buljan as he was about to fire on goal.

The second period started in the same vein as the first, at a frenzied pace and with both midfields going at each others throats; namely Gumprecht, Edgar and the tireless flank-runner Scott

Miller for Glory, while Steve Panopoulos, Vince Lia and Zeljko Susa worked just as tirelessly for the visitors. Billy Damianos, who had four years of Greek football, was close to not playing because of a mid-week ankle strain but he showed no signs of discomfort after putting in a strong performance out of midfield and with his dead-ball kicks.





German import Andre Gumprecht played an instrumental role in Glory's two-nil win over South Melbourne.

But it was the rock-solid rear-guard of the Perth team that played a major role in the final result. Apart from being the victim of a Buljan 'nutmeg' after 42 minutes, David Tarka especially, was in great touch with his aerial supremacy and no-nonsense tackling.

Glory made sure of maximum points nine minutes from time when substitute Mark Byrnes took the ball from the right wing and switched it to the left where Hassell and Miller combined to feed the ball forward to Mori, who clipped a bye-line ball into the 6-yard box for Despotovski to head in his fourth goal of the season.

Apart from an easy grab by Petkovic to a soft header from Vaughan Coveny four minutes from time, the game ended as a resounding win to the defending premiers. There was concern in the Glory camp when Pryce limped off in the 76th minute with a calf injury but d'Avray was confident the stopper will be right for next week's game at Sydney United.

	Northern Spirit	1
	Sydney United	0

By Joe Russo

Northern Spirit managed to climb off the bottom of the table thanks to a Noel Spencer goal in the 69th minute while Sydney United, who continue their poor record away from home this season, missed an opportunity to possibly enter the top six.

Spencer, who was arguably the best player on the park, took advantage of a defensive error from Louis Brain and cleverly slotted the ball past the outstretched hand of giant goalkeeper Vanja Ivesa.

The home section of the 2,016 crowd at North Sydney Oval was delighted and considering recent poor attendances at Spirit home games, this marginally better attendance is a step in the right direction. However, it is still a poor indictment on the NSL in

general when a local derby on a lovely evening can only attract such a poor attendance.

Spirit coach Lawrie McKinna, who hasn't had much to smile about all year, would have been fairly satisfied with his team's performance but his Sydney United counterpart, Branko Culina, would have been left scratching his head at the thought of letting precious points slip away considering that United were on the verge of a top six place prior to the game.

Despite the narrow loss, Culina can be satisfied that his side certainly didn't go down without a fight. In fact if lady luck had gone United's way in the second half they may well have shared the points at least.

Sydney United's downfall was a combination of their missed chances, the Brain error which conceded the goal and the 77th minute sending off of Boris Pavic for a terrible foul on

Jonathon Richter.

Pavic's lack of discipline at a crucial time, considering that he had already been booked for an elbow on Alex Wilkinson some twenty minutes earlier, would not have pleased Culina at all.

The first real chance of the game was in the 20th minute when Spirit's New Zealand international Brent Fisher saw his header well saved from Ivesa in goal. The Croatian keeper, in his debut NSL season, has been a real find for Sydney United and was arguably their best performer in this game.

A few minutes later it was Spirit's Dylan MacAllister who charged towards goal but was denied by the United defence.

MacAllister, who has had to endure a long and drawn out transfer clearance from Europe, was one of the best players for Spirit in his debut game this season in the NSL.



Just prior to half time John Hutchinson narrowly shot wide for Spirit as both teams went into the dressing rooms scoreless at the break.

The first chance in the second half fell to MacAllister but his shot was again well saved by Ivesa in goal. In the 53rd minute, after a nasty tackle by United's veteran defender Dave Barrett on Spencer, most players rushed towards the midfield of the field to push and shove each other and Barrett and Spirit's Julian Watts received yellow cards for their trouble.

Anthony Doumanis, a 59th minute replacement for United, seemed to spark the visitors into action. He set up Brendan Santalab for a shot that went narrowly wide and Sean Babic, making his debut for United this season after transferring from Wollongong, but his shot was well saved by Paul Henderson in goal.

From the resulting corner a fierce volley from Damon Collina thundered against Spirit's crossbar. Luck certainly wasn't on United's side in these three instances.

In the end it was Spencer's goal that proved to be the difference between the two sides as Northern Spirit prepare to face Marconi Stallions in another local derby on Monday night in a catch-up game for the club.

	Adelaide City Force	1
	Brisbane Strikers	0

By Allan Crisp

Adelaide City Force was sorely depleted, but not defeated at Hindmarsh Stadium on Friday night when it ground the seven-game unconquered sequence of Brisbane Strikers to a halt.

Despite being minus the vast experience of suspended Aurelio Vidmar, Michael Valkanis and Goran Lozanovski, the home team deservedly triumphed over the uncompromising Strikers.

The success brought stunted praise from Force "caretaker" coach Zoran Matic for the players who filled the breach.

Asked post match how he felt the replacements had performed, Matic, who had officiated his 450th coaching assignment, said, "It doesn't matter who plays as long as they fight for 90 minutes."

Matic then delivered a glow of hope when he added, "I won't forget the fight shown by the younger players tonight."

Brisbane boss John Kosmina interpreted the result as overconfidence on the part of his players, intimating they were basking in the glory of the big win over reigning NSL champions Olympic Sharks from the previous match.

"Sometimes it's hard for the players to understand about humility," Kosmina said. "Hopefully, they learnt about that tonight," he said before applying a well directed punch line "Everyone was a follower out there tonight. No-one wanted to be a leader."

Man-of-the-match, Carl Veart signalled City's intentions from the kick-off as he unleashed an electrifying run from defence and into the

heart of opposition territory.

With both teams closing down the man in possession with lightning tackles, the contest, right from the outset, suggested goals would be at a premium.

A 40th minute penalty was converted by Claudio Pelosi to provide City with maximum points after young Scott Tunbridge was floored by Steve Laybutt in the box.

Brisbanes go-to-forwards, Fernando Rech and Tony Roche were snuffed out of the game by Veart, captain Ante Kovacevic, Diego Pellegrini and Iain Fyfe.

Brazilian star Rech was replaced by Adam Webber in the 63rd minute as Kosmina explored

attacking alternatives.

When the Strikers did penetrate David Scarsella made some remarkable saves to convince Matic that he deserves to be retained as first choice goalkeeper, while new signing Louie Acevski should wait for his promotion.

Scarsella came under fire in the 69th minute with a feet-first save to deny Laybutt after Shane Stefanutto supplied the cross.

Two minutes later Scarsella rallied to the rescue to save a drive from Roche, but the goalkeeper saves his best until the last minute by tipping another Laybutt header over the crossbar.

Referee Matthew Breeze kept his yellow card in his back pocket until the 76th minute when he booked Brisbanes Jon McKain, but brought it out twice more in the final two minutes to reprimand Webber and Veart.



Force's Italian import Claudio Pelosi scored the game's only goal from the spot-kick to gift Adelaide the three valuable points.



Sydney United new recruit Sean Babic shown marked by Spirit defender Alex Tobin during last Friday's clash.



National League Round 18 Reports



	Melbourne Knights	0
	Parramatta Power	4

By Alan Clark

Parramatta Power defeated Melbourne Knights by a convincing four-goal margin at Knights Stadium on Sunday evening, putting itself very much in Finals contention, and perhaps dealing the Knights' own Finals aspirations a fatal blow in the process.

Power's diminutive striker John Buonavoglio did most of the damage, scoring two, as well as setting up Pablo Cardozo with a single. Brad Maloney got Power's other goal.

Knights had managed to squander a second-minute penalty - Anthony Pelikan finding the outside of the post from the spot after he had been brought down by Brendan Renaud.

Parramatta coach Nick Theodorakopoulos however wasn't totally satisfied despite the comprehensive nature of the victory. "We were looking for the fifth (goal) so we could get above Adelaide City on goal-difference," he said at the after-match media conference.

"I think we've put in better performances," he said. "I wouldn't say we

played badly - we certainly played better than (Knights), I just thought that we could have done a little bit more."

Knights' player-coach Andrew Marth was harsh in his criticism of his players. "I think it's the (worst) performance I've (seen) from the Melbourne Knights in about thirteen years," he said. "It was totally embarrassing. It was pathetic."

It could have started so brightly for Knights. Pelikan had been fouled in the penalty-area after a mazy run by Knights' best player Henry Fa'arodo had the Power defence unsettled. Fa'arodo had made his run to the bye-line, then played the ball inside to Pelikan near the penalty-spot. As the Knights' top scorer was in the cat of shooting, Renaud fouled him, and referee Mark Shield pointed to the spot without protest.

Pelikan picked himself up and took the kick, but sent it too far wide of Power goalkeeper Liam Reddy's right. The ball hit the outside of the post and rebounded away.

"When things are going bad (for us), they really go bad," said Marth.

"(Pelikan) normally puts them away (and) people start dropping their heads, especially the young inexperienced play-

ers, and that's what we showed out there today."

Buonavoglio punished the Knights' miss within the quarter-hour, taking advantage of a defensive error by Marth to speed unchallenged towards Martin John in the Knights' goal and then shoot low under John's body for the opener.

Immediately after the goal, Theodorakopoulos was engaged in an earnest discussion with Power captain Alvin Ceccoli. "I sent out a message to play on the counter - on the break - and it seemed to have worked," he said later.

Just before the interval, Marth and his defensive partner Rodrigo Vargas contrived to show that sometimes two players' defensive attentions provides a less effective return than just one. Maloney took advantage of the confusion to wriggle clear and poke home a bobbling ball to double Power's lead.

Power doubled its lead again in a devastating three minute spell in the second half. Buonavoglio once again showed his speed in a solo run where he outfoxed Daniel Rocco and shot home from 15 metres. Cardozo had taken an excellent defence-diverting position to his left, and was always available if Buonavoglio felt

the need to pass.

"Buonavoglio is hot and cold when it comes to his finishing - thank God tonight he was hot," said Theodorakopoulos.

Cardozo himself completed the scoring in the very next attack. Buonavoglio had made a run to the bye-line and swept past Vargas before sending a cut-back to Cardozo. Cardozo could hardly fail to score from his unmarked position on the penalty-spot.

Including the penalty that hit the post, Knights had just three on-target shots compared to Power's ten. Knights truly looked second-rate across the park in this game, and it will take an enormous effort to win its way into Finals action this year.

But there were some bright spots - Fa'arodo looked as if he was prepared to take on Power single-handed if needed, and even from his new position wide on the right which he occupied in the first half, he looked confident and capable.

Gustavo Biscayacu also looked lively after his introduction, but there were few other Knights' players willing to follow their lead.

"I think (Fa'arodo) had quite a good game," said Marth. "He worked very hard, tackled, worked back - I've got no complaints about (him). I thought (Vargas) did OK. I thought the rest (of the Knights' players) were below par, and some were atrocious."



Knights' Solomon Islands star Henry Fa'arodo shown challenging Power's Wayne O'Sullivan for the ball during last Sunday's clash.

	Wollongong Wolves	2
	Newcastle Utd	2

By Otto Bader

A very entertaining game in front of 2637 spectators was controversially decided in injury time with a more than dubious penalty.

Both coaches agreed it was an incorrect decision as the replay on WIN television showed. Defender Buddy Farah took the ball cleanly outside the area but referee Eddie Lennie awarded the penalty.

Goals were scored in the six minute when Wollongong was caught out napping. Newcastle's Joel Griffiths broke free on the right and with the ball was not cleared he coolly converted not giving the keeper a chance.

It was a set back for Wollongong and Newcastle looked very fast on the ball, distributing the ball well, making it tough for the Wolves to get into the game.

Several dangerous attacks from corners and shots were cleared with difficulties by the Wolves. Slowly the Wolves freed themselves from a firm grip and when David Cervinski needed a perfect pass through to Stuart

Young only good defending helped the opposition out to keep their lead.

A free kick from around 30 yards out right in front of the opposition goal brought the equaliser when Wollongong's Robert Stanton hit a terrific shot finding the target.

The second part started with tempo by both sides, Travis Dodd from Newcastle showed his speed

many times and caused problems for the home defence. In the 60th minute Newcastle scored off a corner and the goal was disallowed for an infringement in the goal-area, not clearly to be seen by the spectators, needless to say coach Ian Cook said afterwards it was a goal.

The Wolves survived and hit the front when Newcastle's keeper Daniel Beltrame - another former Wollongong boy - dropped a high cross and Naum Sekulovski was at hand to place the ball into the net. Both teams had minor opportunities with shots and headers going wide or both keepers alert and preventing any score. Substitutions were made by Newcastle and Wollongong in the final quarter. The replacements coming on tried hard to force a win with good running. Unfortunately the game ended in controversy with the penalty given in injury time.

Wolves coach Ron Corry would not comment but only expressed his terrible disappointment, saying one has to accept decisions and hoped the team is learnt from it.

Newcastle coach Ian Cook was also disappointed with some rulings but was full of praise for his young charges, actually saying all players showed determination and effort. He mentioned as very influential his midfield general Mark Wilson. His team stays in the top half of the table while the Wolves are just outside the top six.



Newcastle United's ace marksman bagged a double in his team's two-all draw with the Wollongong Wolves.

	Olympic Sharks	1
	Football Kingz	0

By Peter Damalas

Defending champions the Olympic Sharks recorded a much needed victory on Saturday evening to get their campaign for the minor premiership back on track.

On the back of two successive losses, at home to Parramatta and a 3-0 hiding at Ballymore last week, the 1-0 win and the three points proved to be of vital importance as the Sharks chase Perth Glory in second spot.

While the Toyota Park pitch showed signs of improvement from the last two home fixtures, it was the blustery conditions that played havoc



Olympic Sharks midfielder Troy Halpin attempts to block Chris Jackson of the Football Kingz.

to the flow of the match, and in the end ensured a rather lifeless performance from both teams.

Both sets of players would have been relieved at the arrival of rain just before the kick off and the cool breeze provided by the brisk northerly.

With temperatures in Sydney reaching approximately 40 degrees celsius during the day, difficult playing conditions were expected.

The winds assisted the home team in the first period as the Kingz struggled to clear their lines. The away team refused to be intimidated by Olympic and competed well for the ball.

Referee Simon Micallef was required on occasions to hand out warnings, and booked Raffaele DeGregorio and Troy Halpin for unnecessary lunges at opponents.

It was Halpin who attempted to calm the nerves of the home supporters with an audacious shot from inside his own half. With the assistance of the wind, Halpin caught everyone by surprise before the chip was comfortably claimed by Michael Utting.

The closest Olympic came to scoring was from the shins of Jeromy Harris. As the forward charged down the Kingz defender, Jonathan Perry, the clearance rebounded onto his legs and ended wide of the post.

In the 43rd minute, Ishida was inches away from connecting to a cross from the right.

The Kingz played intelligently in the first half, containing Olympic's attacking moves and playing the ball to James Pritchett on the right, who frequently went around his marker, Hiroyuki Ishida.

As expected, the Kingz had the better of possession and were entrenched in Olympic's half in the second period. Goalkeepers did not provide relief for the Sharks as the clearances travelled only 30 metres before being forced back due to the wind.

Ken Dugdale's side adopted a shoot-on-sight policy as Vlahos and then Jackson attempted to catch the goalkeeper off guard.

Olympic began to recover as Harris became more involved in the lead up plays. On 67 minutes, his through ball from the centre circle released Ante Milicic, who spotted Utting off his line, and scored the deciding goal with a delightful chip which slowly flew into the back of the net.

While the goalkeeper rushed forward in an attempt to close down the angle for the shot, he left the goals painfully exposed to the supreme piece of technical skill from Milicic.

Gary Phillips' team relaxed after the goal, and substitute Joel Porter (rushed back into the side after his trial in France) ignited proceedings with excellent running and distribution.

Olympic had two more opportunities to close the game down, both falling to Milicic.

The night was soured however by the injury sustained by Greg Owens. After coming onto the field in the 86th minute, he was forced off in stoppage time after Kingz player Jonathan Taylor clattered into him in another physical challenge.

New Zealand danger man, Heremaia Ngata, was denied the appropriate service, and ended an unforgettable night with a shot directly at the goalkeeper.

The primary emotion circling around Toyota Park at the conclusion was relief, as Olympic ended a lean spell and returned to the winner's circle with a the type of clinical victory that has characterised their season thus far.

BYE — MARCONI STALLIONS

SOCCERWOMAN — By Janene Mar

ALL ROADS LEAD TO CANBERRA FOR AUSTRALIA CUP

The 5th Australia Cup featuring the Matildas, Sweden, Mexico, and South Korea will be staged at Canberra's Belconnen Soccer Centre with three doubleheader match days commencing on Australia Day, Sunday 26 January.

The Matildas will open their campaign against South Korea, the team over whom they produced a clean sweep of three victories to claim the 2002 Australia Cup twelve months ago. The Koreans this time will be out to turn the tables on the home side, particularly in their last few months' preparation before attempting to qualify for their first ever World Cup.

Australia then takes on Mexico for the first time in their international history. Mexico remains alive in their quest to qualify for their second World Cup after recently placing third in their regional CONCACAF Qualifiers, but will have to play off against Asia's third best team (possibly South Korea) for the last coveted berth to China 2003.

The feature match of the tournament promises to be the last fixture — the Matildas versus favourites Sweden. Sweden is indeed one of the true powerhouses of women's football, having competed in every senior FIFA women's event to date (three World Cups and two Olympic Games). The two nations last met at the Sydney 2000 Olympics, a gutsy Australian display holding the Swedish attack to a 1-1 draw.

This Australia Cup plays a vital role in kicking off a big year for the Matildas which also includes the Oceania World Cup Qualifiers (in April), and the FIFA Women's

World Cup in China (Sept/Oct).

The last time the Matildas played in Canberra was on the historic occasion of the 2000 Olympic Games, that evening of 13 September being Australia's opening match and indeed the Matildas' Olympic debut. Before a near-capacity crowd of 24,800, Australia put up a solid performance before going down to eventual bronze medalists Germany.

All fixtures will be held at the new Belconnen Soccer Centre in McKellar, home of the Belconnen Blue Devils.

MATCH SCHEDULE — 5TH AUSTRALIA CUP:

Sun 26 January
Mexico v Sweden
AUSTRALIA v South Korea
5.00pm
7.30pm
Wed 29 January
Sweden v South Korea
AUSTRALIA v Mexico
5.00pm/7.30pm
Sat 1 February
South Korea v Mexico
AUSTRALIA v Sweden
5.00pm
7.30pm

TOURNAMENT VENUE:
Belconnen Soccer Centre
Owen Dixon Dr (cnr of William Slim Dr)
McKellar ACT 2617

THE MATILDAS

This 5th Australia Cup provides a vital lead-in to a big year for the Matildas, with the all-important Oceania World Cup Qualifiers less than three months away in early April. There the Matildas will hopefully claim the region's single ticket to China in September/October for the 2003 Women's World Cup, Australia's third consecutive Women's World Cup.

In essence this is the beginning of the business end of this current World Cup campaign and also the Athens 2004 Olympic Games which are only eighteen months away.

Playing here against three quality teams with such diverse playing styles provides a welcome challenge at this point in proceedings.

Since his appointment as AIS/National Coach in November 2001, Adrian Santrac followed up the 2002 Australia Cup with two overseas tours — the four-nation Tournoi International de France, then two Canada friendlies preceding the prestigious Nike US Cup. As well as gaining valuable competition against some of the best from Europe, North America, and Asia, the Matildas came away with the Australia Cup crown and a best ever second placing at the Nike US Cup.

Santrac took the opportunity to test out 29 different players over those three tournaments, but with this 2003 Australia Cup selection has indicated he had the big events of the year ahead at the forefront of his thinking.

Amongst this 18-member team is one debutante, two making their comeback and another pair returning from injury.

Hayley Crawford celebrates her first Matildas selection, the 18-year-old last year playing a key role in the Young Matildas campaign at the inaugural FIFA U19 World Championship, finishing as Australia's top scorer with three goals from the four matches.

Kristyn Swaffer last wore the green and gold as a member of the 1999 World Cup team, whilst Danielle Small receives her first call-up since narrowly missing selection for the 2000 Olympic Games through injury.

Bryony Duus and Claire Nichols make their return following periods

of injury. The Matildas have an impressive record in the history of the Australia Cup, having lifted the trophy on three of the previous four occasions.

HEAD TO HEAD — AUSTRALIA v SOUTH KOREA

W-D-L 4-0-1
25/03/96 M-Wey Tri Series
Auckland NZL Australia won 1-0
29/03/96 M-Wey Tri Series
Auckland NZL South Korea won 2-1
19/01/02 Australia Cup
Bendigo AUS Australia won 4-1
16/01/02 Australia Cup
Albury AUS Australia won 1-0
13/01/02 Australia Cup
Wagga Wagga AUS Australia won 1-0

HEAD TO HEAD — AUSTRALIA v MEXICO

W-D-L 0-0-0
The two nations have never previously met

HEAD TO HEAD — AUSTRALIA v SWEDEN

W-D-L 2-1-3
27/05/95 Pre-World Cup
Helsingborg SWE Sweden won 5-0
07/08/97 European Tour
Ostersund SWE Australia won 1-0
20/03/99 Algarve Cup
Montebelo POR Australia won 1-1, 7-6ps
23/06/99 World Cup
Washington USA Sweden won 3-1
07/01/00 Australia Cup
Sydney AUS Sweden won 2-0
16/09/00 Olympic Games
Sydney AUS Draw 1-1

PREVIOUS AUSTRALIA CUPS:
1999 1st AUSTRALIA, 2nd Italy, 3rd Canada
2000 1st USA, 2nd Sweden, 3rd AUSTRALIA, 4th Czech Republic
2001 1st

IT'S NOT OVER INSISTS D'AVRAY

By Richard Kreider

Perth Glory coach Mich d'Avray has gone on the defensive with regards the National Soccer League competition by refusing to believe his side and the Olympic Sharks have a cast-iron grip on the season, despite the huge point buffer between them and the other challengers in the first stage of the new championship format.

Speaking after Glory's excellent 2-0 win over South Melbourne at Perth Oval last Saturday night, d'Avray repudiated questions from the media about the contest being just a two-horse race.

"When you see the game tonight, there wasn't a lot to choose between the two sides," he said. "I think there are a lot of good teams in the competition and although we played very well and we had a good result, it could very well have been different."

"They (South Melbourne) are capable of beating us. This notion that it will be just the Glory and Sharks is wrong. Maybe we don't give the other clubs the respect they deserve," said a somewhat riled d'Avray, who is currently caught up in speculation about an interest for

his services from Holland.

"Ok, we are doing exceptionally well, but I don't think we can still take anything for granted. We didn't have to just turn up and beat South Melbourne, we had to play some good football and defend well," he said.

Meanwhile, South Melbourne coach Danny Wright was equally optimistic of his charges being still in with a chance for the championship.

"We'll just keep going as I think we are getting stronger as the season progresses," he said. "I believe we have got the depth in the squad to remain a real threat this year."



Perth Glory coach Mich d'Avray.

Knights sack assistant coach

The Melbourne Knights have reacted to poor recent form by sacking assistant coach Luciano Trani.

Confirming Trani's dismissal to the Herald Sun, Knights President Ange Cimeria said there will be more changes made, including to the playing roster, unless the team starts winning again.

"Top heads will roll if there's no results," Cimeria said.

"It includes everybody who we feel is not doing the job, on both sides of the fence."

Trani began with the Knights more than five years ago as a youth coach, and has not only scouted the Victorian Premier League and rival clubs for possible recruits since then, but also helped playing coach Andrew Marth at training the past two years.

"I'm shocked and it's left a bad taste in my mouth but I know I can

hold my head up high," Trani said. "I left my (day) job to join the Knights and I was clocking up 70-75



Luciano Trani: The Knights have parted company with the former Assistant-Coach of the club.

hours a week for the club while accepting a pay cut at the same time."

"I don't know why they're getting rid of an assistant. I would have understood if the whole package went but I neither picked the team nor made the changes."

Marth was the one to break the news to Trani on Monday night, and says that after six losses from the team's last eight starts, it was logical there would be casualties.

"It's disappointing to see him go because he's also a good friend, but when a team loses so many games everyone is under threat for sure. It could be me next week," Marth said.

The Knights have also suffered an on-field blow, with leading goalscorer Anthony Pelikan no certainty to play again this season after breaking down again with the knee ligament injury that has kept him out for the past three weeks.

SYDNEY UNITED RESPOND TO CROWD DISTURBANCES

In response to the recent events and media articles concerning crowd disturbances by spectators linked to the Sydney United Soccer Club, the Clubs' Board of Directors has embarked on a number of pro-active initiatives to combat this problem.

The club has outsourced its security to a professional crowd control company — e-Group Security. e-Group have been working as our security company throughout the season and have done a great job in ensuring that the Sydney United Sports Centre is a safe and friendly venue for all spectators.

e-Group are well known in the industry and are currently working closely with the Wests Tigers club in the NRL competition.

e-Group will send specialised security guards to all Sydney United's away games for the rest of the 2002/2003 NSL season to ensure crowd control.

They will be on hand at United's game against Northern Spirit this Friday night at North Sydney Oval and will help ensure the safety and comfort of all supporters.

The Sydney United Soccer Club

does not condone the behaviour of a small minority of 'thugs' who DO NOT represent the ideals and principles of this club.

We will do everything in our power to work with the relevant authorities to eradicate this problem, which gives the game a bad name.

We are proud to say that we represent the soccer community and what is good in the game and the efforts of e-Group and other organisations will ensure that we can move forward with confidence.



Victorian country coaching breeds self-knowledge and reliance

By Roy Hay

One hundred and thirty-six boys from all over Victoria are having the time of their lives this week at the Victorian Soccer Federation country coaching camp at Deakin University in Geelong.

VSF Director of Coaching, Ian Greener, said the aims of the course were to teach soccer skills and to develop an understanding of what was necessary to become an elite player. For some it is a first step towards a scholarship at the Victorian Institute of Sport but all will benefit from the intensive program. Youngsters between the ages of 12 and 15 were being shown what was happening to them as they trained and played so that they would gain the self-knowledge and reliance to improve their skills.

Using many of the techniques developed at the Victorian Institute of Sports and at high-level courses around the world, Greener and his team of dedicated coaches are setting out to provide Victorian youngsters with the means to reach the top. The use of heart rate monitors, lectures on sports injuries and match analyses are only some of the elements involved in the program.

The value of these sessions was illustrated recently when an Australian Institute of Sport graduate Carl Valeri, now at Italian giant club Inter Milan said in an interview in ABSW, "I went through the AIS program ... that taught me how to recover before and after every match. I have used these experiences

to further help me in Italy, but it is good to see that the Australian method off the park rates among the best in the world".

Drawn from all the affiliated regions of the VSF the youngsters have travelled from Mildura, Swan Hill, Gippsland, Shepparton, Albury-Wodonga, Ballarat and Bendigo at their own expense to experience first class training. The Geelong area is well represented with a number of participants at each level. The course is a balance of soc-



Victorian Country Sports Development Officer Bobby McLauchlan.

cer and self-management skills and the youngsters are shown that even if they don't make it to the very top as players there is a whole range of opportunities in the sport for those who are prepared to think about what they are learning. Coaching, refereeing, physiotherapy, sports science, management and adminis-

tration are other career paths for youngsters who start out determined to be a player.

The coaching personnel at the camp includes Sports Development Officer Bobby McLauchlan, himself a former National Soccer League coach, goalkeeping coach Lou Castner, Melbourne Knights keeper and VSF graduate Martin John, President of the Victorian Soccer Referees, Chris Bambridge and Eddie Grace who has seen many of these youngsters come through the Goalkick program over which he presides. Ernie Merrick brought the VSF squad to Deakin University on Wednesday night to play a match against a senior country squad, while the young players carried out a detailed analysis of the game as part of their program.

Ian Greener was delighted with the facilities, accommodation and support at the Warrnambool campus. The camp had been held very successfully at Ballarat for the last three years, so there was a high standard to maintain.

"We have to extend this service to the metropolitan area and provide a similar camp for the girls", he said. "The VSF is seeking to appoint a full time development officer to oversee this program in future". But his parting shot was that the whole experience should be fun for the youngsters involved.

"We show them how they have to be very turned on when they are training, but there is a time to switch off and just enjoy what you are doing. If it is not fun, what is the point?"



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SUNSHINE COAST SUPERB

By Paul Schiavo

The penultimate round of fixtures in the Super Summer League brought together leaders Sunshine Coast and Qld Lions in a match that would go long way in determining the outcome of this year's competition.

Sunshine Coast came into the match knowing that a win would secure the championship and a point would leave the destiny of the championship still in their hands, going into the difficult last round of fixtures away to Rochdale.

Lions knew that a win was paramount if the last round away to Toowoomba was to make a difference. A draw would leave the championship out of Lions' hands and even a win on the last day would need them relying on the Sunshine Coast losing their last game.

Going into the big game, the Sunshine Coast led the standings on 19 points, with a goal difference of +12, whilst the Lions were in second place with 16 points and a goal difference of +13.

So, all the ingredients were there for a battle royal in the quest for the inaugural Super Summer League Championship and what a game it turned out to be.

Qld Lions2
Sunshine Coast5
HT 1-2 LION'S STADIUM

As early as the third minute you could sense this was going to be a great game when Lion's midfielder Terry Hughes won a fifty-fifty tackle in the middle of the park. Winning the tackle, he slid the ball to Cody Lovell who passed one defender after another. His left foot strike from just inside the box was parried by Mick Sticklen, only for Lovell to follow up and score from the rebound.

Qld Lions1
Sunshine Coast0

It was just the start that Lions wanted, catching their rivals on the hop. Could they hang on?

Well that question was answered in no uncertain terms when from the kick-off only a point blank save by Griffin McMaster in the Lion's goal after a Beau Hodge rocket kept the scoreline in Lion's favour with the defense caught ball watching.

We didn't have to wait long either for the equalizer for only a minute later, a poor pass from Ben Fisher was intercepted by Nathan Kunst who calmly curled the ball into the top left hand corner of the Lions' net from 25 metres giving McMaster no chance.

Qld Lions1
Sunshine Coast1

This quick reply from the visitors stunned the Lions and with their next attack the Coast almost snatched a second when an unmarked Nathan Kunst saw his header sail high over the crossbar.

In the 10th minute the Coast were in again.

A cross came over from the right and seemed to cross the goal line. Whilst the Lion's defenders were appealing to referee Tammy Ogstan to signal the goal kick, the Sunshine Coast players played on and were rewarded as the ball found its way to Muscroft who tapped into an unguarded goal.

Even though the Lion's defenders protested the decision, the goal stood.

Qld Lions1
Sunshine Coast2
Ten minutes gone, three goals and you just could

sense there was more of this to come with both sides desperate for the result.

Three minutes later, Lions almost equalized when a poor back pass was collected by Lion's striker Scott Royal but cool action from advancing goalkeeper Sticklen saw the keeper round the advancing striker and clear to safety.

In the 21st minute a fine run by Nathan Kunst down the Lion's left saw the striker cross for partner Jai Cross, only for his volley from the penalty spot to be saved on the line by defender Michael Sciardi, with McMaster well beaten.

It was all Sunshine Coast now and their midfield was running the show, as the Lion's passing game began to crumble.

Only a Scott Royal shot that sailed harmlessly wide was the Lion's reply to the Sunshine Coast onslaught.

However this seemed to spark on the Lions and Danny Flasks should have done better with a right-footed strike from inside the Coast box after some fine lead up work by the striker.

Lions looked dangerous now and Cody Lovell down the left was causing some problems for the Sunshine Coast back four. It was one of these runs down the left that set up Danny Flasks for a fierce first time strike from 20metres that could only be parried by Sticklen, luckily straight to a defender.

The Coast were starting to tire now and Lions, with a greater share of possession in midfield, were starting to dominate.

In the 42nd minute Terry Hughes was unlucky with a shot that just sailed over the crossbar from outside the box, after the midfielder had dribbled past two defenders.

The teams entered the dressing rooms with the Sunshine Coast leading by two goals to one however the Lion's cause was not helped by a serious injury right on half time to inform defender Michael Sciardi. With defender Sean Curtis also injured, the Lion's defense was looking a little shaky for what would be, on all accounts a repetition of the first half.

Apart from the early strike by Lions and the penetration on the left by Cody Lovell, it was the Coast that looked the better side and deserved their half time lead.

That was all to change within a minute of the restart.

In a repeat of the first half, Lion's first attack led to a goal.

Danny Flasks found substitute Adam Mc Skimming on the right and his cross found an unmarked Scott Royal in the six-yard box for the easiest of equalizers.

Qld Lions2
Sunshine Coast2

What a great start to the half for the Lions in what was proving to be the match of the championship. Whatever coach Gary Johnson said at half time seemed to do the trick, as it was the Lions now that were pushing for the winner. For the next five minutes Lions started to do what Lions do best - play their passing game - something which had been sadly lacking up till now.

Then just as Lions were getting on top, disaster struck.

In the 51st minute a magnificent clearance from Sticklen, travelled almost the entire length of the field. The Lion's defenders watched the ball bounce, as every defender knows, something you just can't afford to do. A poor header coupled with a case of ball watching saw the ball drop to Mathew Muscroft in the Lion's box who placed the ball to the right of McMaster, again with the Lion's

defenders appealing for a non-existent off-side.

Qld Lions2
Sunshine Coast3

Again Lions had it all to do but as they had done last week against the Gold Coast, they kept searching for the goal.

Lions' passing game was still functioning and some good play on the left between Cody Lovell and Daniel Bernardin in the 57th minute saw the pacy Lovell one on one with Sticklen but the keeper saved the day with another fine save at the feet of Lovell.

In the 60th minutes you had one of those episodes that so often turns a match.

Again some fine interplay by the Lion's players saw them string together a number of passes inside the Sunshine Coast area and Tammy Ogstan signalled for a penalty for an infringement.

Here was Lion's chance to even things up again and the way they had come out for the second half anything was possible.

Danny Flasks strode up confidently to take the spot kick but Sticklen made a wonderful save to his left to deny Lions the equalizer.

This was not in the script for the Lions and you sensed this would eventually take its toll.

The Sunshine Coast knew that this was the time for the match to be decided and within the next 20 minutes it was all over.

To Lion's credit they tried hard but the penalty seemed to knock the stuffing out of them. This, combined with a make shift defense played right into the Sunshine Coast's hands.

Sunshine Coast substitute Jamie Keane had an effort just sail over in the 75th minute and the striking duo of Kunst and Cross were starting to draw the makeshift Lion's defense all over the place. Combined with the pressure exerted by the Coast all over the park you knew that something had to give.

In the 80th minute, the inevitable happened.

From a free kick that floated into the Lion's penalty area, Nathan Kunst controlled the ball, and in one movement, shrugged off his marker and sent the ball flying into the top left hand corner of the net past a despairing McMaster.

Qld Lions2
Sunshine Coast4

The Championship was heading north and there was little that Lions could do about it. Their task, to score three goals in ten minutes, was well beyond them.

In the 82nd minute a similar free kick to the one that led to the fourth Coast goal was floated in from the right. This time the ball fell to Jai Cross who deservedly finished in fine fashion.

Qld Lions2
Sunshine Coast5

All over now bar the shouting and only a fine save by McMaster right at the death stopped the scoreline from being extended.

Final Score

Qld Lions2
Sunshine Coast5

Difficult to choose the best players for the Coast in a fantastic team performance but Hodge, Kunst, Cross and Muscroft looked dangerous every time they touched the ball. One shouldn't forget the heroics in goal by Sticklen, especially the penalty save.

For Lions, McMaster in goals had his best game of the tournament, even though he had to pick the

QLD SUPER SUMMER LEAGUE NEXT WEEK FIXTURES

All Games Kick-Off at
7.00pm

SATURDAY JANUARY 25

Rochdale Rovers

VS

Sunshine Coast

Soccer Far North Coast

VS

Gold Coast City

Toowoomba Raiders

VS

Queensland Lions

ball out of the net five times and Cody Lovell down the left flank was the instigator of most of Lions' attacking forays.

The unfancied Sunshine Coast before the competition had started, were now crowned as champions.

Coach Dave Martin and his players should be congratulated for an outstanding achievement against all the odds. With only a small area to draw from, they have produced a side capable of humbling some of the bigger sides both home and away, playing a fine blend of skilful and aggressive football.

As coach Dave Martin said after the game, "We had to come to Lions with the belief that we could win and I think the players were extremely confident that they could do the job prior to the match."

"Tactically we knew where to pressure Lions and this worked perfectly for us."

"We also knew that we could play on any pitch, given the criticism of the state of our pitch at Maroochydore. Seeing the surface at Lions in such excellent condition made us quite confident, as we can play the passing game as well as anyone."

Lion's coach Gary Johnson was philosophical after the match.

"Congratulations to the Coast on its win as very few teams come to Lions and come away with anything"

"We had a number of players missing for the match, players of the calibre of Danny Wilson, Damien Volker and Chris DiSipio and then to lose Sean Curtis, Michael Sciardi and Terry Hughes during the match...well I think we did the best we could under those circumstances."

"The penalty miss was a factor because at the time we were only one goal down and still well and truly in the game."

"You could see the boys heads drop but to their credit they fought to the end against a well disciplined and physically intimidating Sunshine Coast outfit"

In other matches the Gold Coast defeated Rochdale Rovers 5-0 at Underwood Park and the Far North Coast Suns defeated Toowoomba 4-0 in Toowoomba.

Letters to the Editor

NEW SEASON FRUITS

Dear Sir,

Now that the Oceania International Football Confederation has gained direct qualification to the FIFA World Cup, one would expect to rejoice in the news that the region's players, administrators and supporters have finally been treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

Every other player, administrator and supporter in other Confederations have enjoyed such respect on an individual basis as well as being part of the FIFA family.

More importantly they have had the opportunity to aspire on an individual and collective basis to reach the highest level in the sport and win the coveted World Cup prize on an even playing field.

So would you expect an overwhelming level of support from the icons of the sport in this country? Of course one would!

But not so! Two of our "treasures" in Warren and Richards have publicly made very strange comments in that Warren has branded the move as "lowering the bar" and Richards has labeled the move as "a farce".

How "precious" are these two "treasures"? Would they like Oceania International football to regress back to the uneven playing fields that they plied their trade on years ago.

Come on John and Ray, throw the sour grapes in the bin, new summer fruit is about to ripen on the vine of soccer these coming seasons.

Pick a bunch, it tastes a lot better than the stuff you been peddling for sale!!

O. Di Carlo,
Campbelltown, SA.

MARCONI BOARD SHOULD FACE THE MUSIC

Dear Sir,

As a long standing Marconi supporter, I welcome the recent 4-1 home victory over Melbourne Knights with a deep sense of relief, but realistically see it only as temporary respite in what is, by Marconi standards, an inglorious period in Marconi's once proud history.

The Marconi Board must look in the mirror and ask themselves if they really believe that the sacking of Raul Blanco is the answer to the club's problems.

Or is it simply a case of taking some action, so as to be "seen to be doing something?"

When coach Raul Blanco was sacked after 13 rounds, not only was Marconi's NSL side sitting stone motherless last on the NSL table, but their two NSL Youth league sides were also occupying the bottom two spots on the Youth league ladder!

When looking at the big picture, the evidence suggests that Marconi must be doing something very, very wrong in regard to their football operations!

And this cannot by any means, ALL be laid at the feet of Raul Blanco.

Many supporters were astounded and dismayed when former coach Lee Sterrey was shown the door at the end of last season, having performed creditably, under difficult circumstances.



Under Sterrey, a cash strapped Marconi side, while certainly no world beaters, appeared to at least play with a passion for the jersey, and missed out on a semi final berth only on the last day of the season - and incidentally, after the Marconi Board had (without consulting the coach) allowed top scorer, Royce Brownlie, to fly overseas for trials a few days before the final game!

If Blanco was sacked because of poor results, what about the person or people who made the decision in the first place to replace Sterrey with Blanco?

What responsibility should they take for what has been exposed as

such a bad decision?

With Marconi's footballing stocks at an all time low, the Marconi board should do two things, and urgently.

Firstly, they should commission a comprehensive review of their football operations, in a determined effort to halt this embarrassing slide from champs to chumps.

Secondly, they should be big enough to swallow their collective pride, and admit that they erred in replacing Sterrey as coach, and ask him to take charge of the side for the remainder of the current season.

If the Board take NO action, other than the recent sacking of Blanco, then they will be seen by many supporters as to be failing in their responsibilities.

Clearly, whatever strategies the Board dreamed up at the start of the season are failing, and failing miserably, and they need to be urgently rethought.

It is the Board who is ultimately responsible, and it is they who should now show an appropriate degree of leadership.

Fred Legget,
Narellan Vale.

IRISH DELIGHT FOR SOCCEROOS?

Dear Sir,

Interesting to read that the Socceroos could face off against Ireland in the recent future in WA.

Holding the game here I believe is one of the brightest ideas to have been released by the media.

On a local front the Perth Glory have the largest supporter network of any of the clubs in the country so there is no fear of fans not turning up to the game.

In this time where the domestic game is struggling to draw attention to itself, the Glory seems to have the appropriate remedy.

Secondly the game should be held in WA as in recent years they have been the state with the best development program of young players. Many of their former junior players are now overseas and many more are being trained in a vein making them to perfect target to head abroad. Likewise the Glory has shown the right way to approach managing a club in Australia so if anything the game should be given to them as some type of remuneration.

Lastly WA is still an untapped sporting resource as such. Only Rugby Union has exploited it and already is a major puller of crowds when the matches are played there.

And all this is from a state not renowned for its love of rugby. So imagine then if an international match with any nation is sched-

uled to be played in WA-a State with a love for soccer.

The results would be monumental ensuring that further games would be played in that State, providing for the continuing development and growth of the game in this country.

Josh Tanner,
Canberra, ACT.

EXCLUSIVE SCOOPS

Dear Sir,

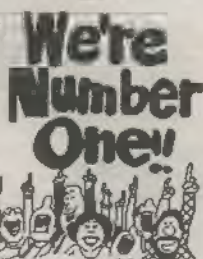
I have noticed a trend in your newspaper and I am delighted to say that I am pleased that only your paper has been able to produce it.

In last week's edition you managed to get an interview with AIS graduate Carl Valeri. Reading it I was extremely impressed by it and realised that you were the only paper who had managed to get an interview with him while he was here on duty with the Young Socceroos.

The week before you also captured an interview with Brett Holman

where he explained his full situation about being unable to represent Australia.

I must admit that when I first heard that he had not made himself I was rather disappointed. But your



article explained his situation in full and I do in fact have sympathy for him and wish him every success in the future.

Your paper is going from strength to strength and it is a credit to your writers that the standards continue to improve. I try to get the paper every Tuesday and I know many others who keenly wait to enjoy the read.

Good work ABSW. Keep up the good work.

Frank Crisco,
Merrylands, NSW.

MARCONI CAN ONLY GET BETTER

Dear Sir,

Amazing isn't it that Marconi thoroughly demolishes the Melbourne Knights after Raul Blanco was dismissed by the club.

I believe Blanco never had any direction for the club, instead he merely took on a job after being out of the game for so long. Consequently the once proud club is teetering close to the bottom of the National League.

This is a disgrace for a club with the unequal record in producing top local and overseas based Australians. Marconi has been at the forefront of soccer in this country and I for one am glad that Blanco is gone.

It will be interesting to see exactly how long his successor Rale Rasic lasts. I believe he should have been shown the door at the same time as Blanco. As Director of Football, Rasic was responsible in ensuring the football team produced results and as such with Marconi second last on the table, failed his job and he too should be accountable for their poor performances to date.

In any case it was good to finally see the Stallions get a worthy result. I hope that this lasts for the rest of the season, but in reality, I do not believe that the club is pointed in the right direction for anything significant to happen to them.

I guess though, results can't get any worse than what they were and the only way is up.

Ray Davidson,



Rale Rasic: New Marconi Coach.

EMERTON ON THE RISE

Dear Sir,

It was great to see Australian star Brett Emerton nominated as being one of the players to watch out for in the UEFA Team of the year.

Its credit to the player who has done ever so well with Dutch club Feyenoord and can only get better.

I've seen a few matches LIVE on cable of Feyenoord with 'Emo' going great guns against quality opposition.

There's been so much talk about 'Emo' moving onwards to England and for one second that and hope he lands a good contract there - he'll be a smash hit for sure.

His pace and ability to take on players is what makes him such an asset to the team, let's hope he can double his performances for the Socceroos when the time comes.

I think it's a brilliant seeing



Brett Emerton

Australians do well in European soccer and I know that it boosts the Australian name up.

Well Done Brett - let's hope more Australians make the grade next year.

Tim Lyon,
Port Macquarie, NSW.

RE: "Wake Up Warren"

Dear Sir,

In ABSW of January 7, a letter from Steve Tsonis, of Epping, had an unfortunate choice of heading, "Wake Up Warren", which did not accurately reflect the spirit of the letter.

Mr Tsonis, with the very best of intentions, took Johnny Warren to task for his well considered comments about Oceania's direct qualification for the World Cup. He felt that Johnny Warren was expressing "negative aspects of football" and that he failed to see "how good this would be for the game in this code."

I would suggest to the headline writer that Johnny woke up long ago and has spent years trying to convince the administrators that the real football world for us is to the north.

The FIFA decision solved the short term "management and financial" aspects of Soccer Australia (whose most pressing need is stay afloat) but failed to provide the avenue for real exposure and

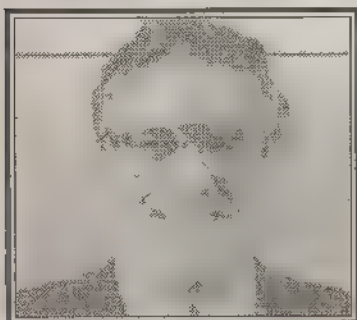
sponsorship for football available through Asia.

Australia and New Zealand beating emerging football nations in Oceania ten and fifteen to nil, does nothing for the beaten teams and probably less for the victors. Even one game against Korea, China or any one of a dozen Asian teams, would provide more atmosphere and real competition for our players plus a TV, cable and satellite audience world wide which international sponsors require before parting with their dollars.

Our administrators have settled for the quick, easy dollars to supplement the levy imposed on all players, including five and six-year-old kids. Of course our national coach embraces the direct route choice because then he will not have to match the tactical skills of opponents like those we encountered last year.

George Green, Wollongbar,
Northern NSW.

OFF THE CROSSBAR



By Allan Crisp

SOUTHERN SUMMER SERIES

Youth has come to the rescue by rallying to the call to compete in the 2003 Southern Night Series that kicks off tonight (Wednesday, January 22) at Wilf Taylor Reserve.

Noarlunga United, Hills Hawks, Cobras, Western Strikers, Seaford Surfers and the SA Sports Institute had already agreed to compete, but two more teams were needed to complete two four team groupings.

Into the breach stepped the Under 23 Youth teams of Enfield Falcons and host club, Noarlunga Bulldogs, to ensure the balance was correct for the pre-season trial competition.

The tournament will be played under the competition rules of the 2002 Smoke Free State League.

To be eligible all players must be registered and all transfers must be completed and their 2003 players license issued.

Double headers will be played on Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday nights with the first match to kick-off at 6pm and the second at 8pm.

The tournament schedule has been arranged to avoid any clash with NSL fixtures involving Adelaide City home games.

The series blazes into action with the Cobras playing Enfield Under 23s and Noarlunga Bulldogs v Hills Hawks.

Group A

Noarlunga Bulldogs
Hills Hawks
Cobras
Enfield Under 23s

Group B

Noarlunga Under 23s
SASI
Western Strikers
Seaford Surfers

RED ALERT

It is said that there is no more dangerous a foe than a player when he comes up against a club that he has previously represented.

Soccer Australia statistical guru Andrew Howe reports that there were eight such players fronting old clubs during NSL round 18 action.

Joe Spiteri, played for Marconi Stallions against his ex-club Melbourne Knights; Dino Menniolo wore the Wollongong colours against Football Kingz; Kosta Salapasidis of Parramatta took on Adelaide City and Clint Bolton kept goal for Olympic Sharks against Brisbane Strikers, something he had in common with Sharks team mates, Jade North, Wayne Srhoj, Jeromy Harris and Stephen Laybutt.

Andrew called up his records to discover that the first case of an NSL player opposing a previous NSL club was on July 3, 1977 (less than three months after the NSL began) when Roberto Echeverria was part of the Brisbane City team which played St George.

The Argentine played one NSL match for the Saints earlier that season.

In all, six players from the inaugural 1977 season played against former clubs.

The largest number of players who played against a former club in a match stands at 11 this happened twice, both times when Parramatta Power met Sydney United in 1999/2000.

The first time, the Power men, who each were previously at Sydney United were Andrew Crews, Joe Vrkic, Michael Santalab, Peter Bennett, Danny Townsend, Steve Berry,

Walter Ardone, Jacob Burns, John Gibson, Mile Sterjovski and Joel Griffiths.

In the second game the Parramatta players were Mike Gibson, Vrkic, Barrett, Santalab, Richard Plesa, Bennett, Townsend, Berry, Ardone, Sterjovski and Joel Griffiths.

Apart from the Parramatta-Sydney United matches, the record number of players performing against previous clubs in a match is nine.

That figure was reached in the two Apia-Marconi games in the 1989 season when the following Marconi players were identified as ex-Apia men.

Bob Catlin, Paul Carter, Ian Gray, Jean-Paul DeMarigny, Peter Katholos, Tom McCulloch, Vince Colagiuri, while the reverse was the case with Craig Mason and Rod Brown.

And, in another Apia-Marconi game, this time in 1989/90, these Marconi men had previously been with Apia Catlin, Gary VanEgmond, DeMarigny, Peter Katholos, McCulloch and Colagiuri, while ex-Apia players were former Marconi servants, Klaus Okon and the flame-haired Brown.

KIDD SEEING STARS

Adelaide Galaxy coach Alby Kidd has returned from an overseas trip confident he should be able to recruit a couple of experienced UK players for his new club.

Kidd explored several of his contacts and on arrival back home he reported to Galaxy owner Con Makris and team manager Jim Carapetis.

Kidd is resigned to losing ace defender Mark Yates to reigning Premier League champions Raiders, midfield general Aaron Westervelt to Para Hills Knights, full back Mark Graham to Metro Stars and Jimmy Tsekis to Enfield Falcons.

Likely Galaxy local recruits are Stephen Kidd, elder son of Alby, and Damien DiMella from Playford Patriots.

Already secured for next season are Ken Tosh, who joins in an exchange deal with Olympic FC striker Peter Mihalopoulos and goalkeeper Darien Bauer, also from Olympic FC.



John Kosmina: Strikers coach assumed their match against the Force was at 8 o'clock not seven.

Another swap deal brings Simon Bernadino from White City Woodville to Galaxy, while Damien Stam moves from Galaxy back to his original club.

CLEAN SWAP

Campbelltown Red Devils and Playford Patriots have brokered a neat exchange deal with Red Devil goalkeeper Andy Allen becoming a Patriot, while striker Theo Anastasiou joined the Red Devils at Newton Sports Field.

"It would be great if all clubs would emulate such a smooth, amicable transition like this swap deal," was the satisfied comment from SASF competitions manager Rodger King.

CLOCKING ON

There was some light hearted banter during last Tuesday's RPH 1197 AM Breakfast Soccer Show when Brisbane Strikers coach John Kosmina was being interviewed.

Told that last Friday nights Adelaide City-Brisbane game would kick-off at 7pm, Kosmina replied, "I thought the kick-off was 8pm."

Quick as a flash, panel member Aurelio Vidmar snapped, "You and your team can come at 8 o'clock."

Later in the program, Northern Spirit coach Lawrie McKinna was lamenting the fact that

former Socceroo captain and Adelaide City icon Alex Tobin should reach his incredible 500-NSL game milestone in the away match against Perth Glory in the round 20 match on February 2.

"I might just drop Alex for that match so he can play the big one at home," said McKinna. Alex Tobin dropped! Now that would be a first.

LEE IS LEAVING

Playford Patriots and SA midfielder Lee Robertson is set to clinch a signing deal with Scottish club Morton.

Meanwhile, the search goes on for former SAIS and Adelaide City Force player Fred Agius, who left Adelaide to join Olympic Sharks.

Talented Agius, who played for the Under 17 Joeys squad in the 2001 World Championships, returned to SA and played Aussie rules football.

Since then a stack of French clubs have reportedly been seeking Agius to offer him trials.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission named Agius Junior Sportsman of the Year for 2001.



Fred Agius: The AWOL youngster is said to be wanted by a number of French clubs.

Vidmar vows to keep place

Middlesbrough defender Tony Vidmar has warned he is not about to give up his place without a fight after waiting patiently for his chance.

The 33-year-old Australian international, who arrived at the Riverside Stadium at the start of the season knowing he would have to bide his time, has been handed his latest opportunity to impress manager Steve McClaren by Ugo Ehiogu's misfortune.



Tony Vidmar in action with Middlesbrough.

Vidmar, who has already proved his worth as a deputy at left-back for suspended Frenchman Franck Queudrue this season, will be the beneficiary of the former Aston Villa centre-back's horrendous clash with Blackburn keeper Brad Friedel, which left him with three fractured ribs and a punctured lung.

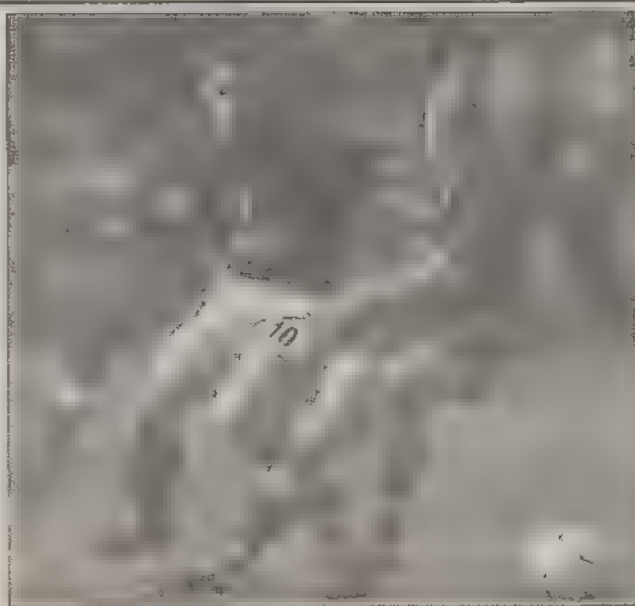
With Ehiogu sidelined for up to eight weeks, the former Glasgow Rangers player is determined to make his presence felt after what he admits has been a frustrating period in his career.

"It was very hard," he admitted. "I came here in around August-September, so the team had already been training over six weeks of pre-season."

"I missed the pre-season and had a lot of catching up to do, but I think that I'd looked after myself fairly well in the off-season, did my own training so I could cope when an opportunity like this came up."

"It's been good. I settled in fairly quickly. I don't think there was any problem at all. From day one when I started training here, everything was pretty much in balance and into the groove."

"I only signed a one-year contract, so I won't be knocking on the door of the manager yet,



Vidmar shown marking Liverpool ace striker Michael Owen.

but I haven't found it a level too high for me. I think I can still compete at this level and I'd definitely like to stay here longer."

Vidmar was initially left in limbo after being released by Rangers at the end of last season, but he had few qualms about accepting Boro's offer of employment after consulting former Ibrox team-mates Claudio Reyna and Giovanni van Bronckhorst, now on the books at Sunderland and Arsenal respectively.

"I've kept in touch with

Claudio Reyna and Giovanni van Bronckhorst, and they told me about how it is in the Premiership," he said. "The game is quicker here, but that's because the ball is more in play here than in Scotland."

"The players are technically better than they are in Scotland, and every week is a difficult game."

"For Rangers and Celtic players, there's an added pressure because you're expected to win every game and win fairly comfortably, but here, that's not the case. They're all difficult

games.

"But I'm enjoying it, really enjoying the challenge of it, and I'm looking forward to staying here longer."

However, despite the raging debate about the difference in quality between the English and Scottish top flights, Vidmar still retains a great deal of affection for football north of the border.

"English football is highly regarded there, and I think at times when you talk to the Scottish press and say you'd like to play in England, it gets blown out of proportion," he said.

"People say the Scottish league is weak maybe, but that's not the case. It's a different kind of football."

"It's much more physical than it is here and the two big teams have a lot more to spend to get quality players, and other teams don't have that kind of luxury."

"But my time in Glasgow was fantastic. I'll never regret that and I'm glad I took that opportunity."

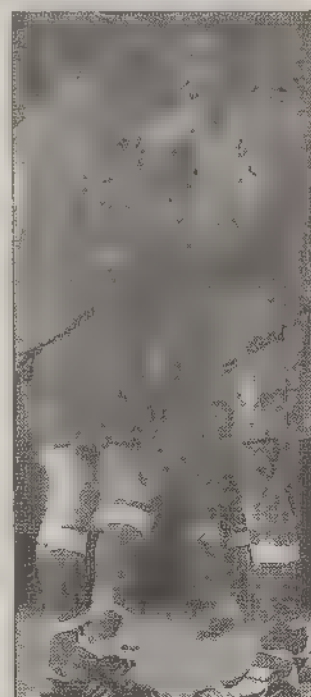
"But I'm here now and I like to take advantage of whatever opportunities I get."

Vidmar is likely to partner Boro skipper Gareth Southgate at the heart of the defence when form side Southampton visit the Riverside on Saturday, and that

is a prospect to which he is looking forward.

"He's been good, he's been very good," he said. "He's a true leader, a very good player and he's helped me throughout the games I've played so far."

"It just makes your job easier if you have someone who's as good a communicator as Gareth is."



Ugo Ehiogu's unfortunate injury has paved the way for Vidmar to enter the frame at Riverside.

One on One with Knights star Ivan Jolic



By Daniela Raco

As we head towards the business end of the season, the competition for a top six placing is sure to be cut-throat. Most are still predicting the Melbourne Knights to make the top-six with a strong second half of the season.

A man capable of keeping the engine room cranking is the Knight's midfield workhorse IVAN JOLIC. Ivan's work rate is tireless and the Knight's forward line remains well-supplied.

Last week I sat down with the pacy Ivan to talk tuna salads, Thailand \$5 specials, and trading places with Hugh Hefner

PLAYER'S POSITION - Midfield

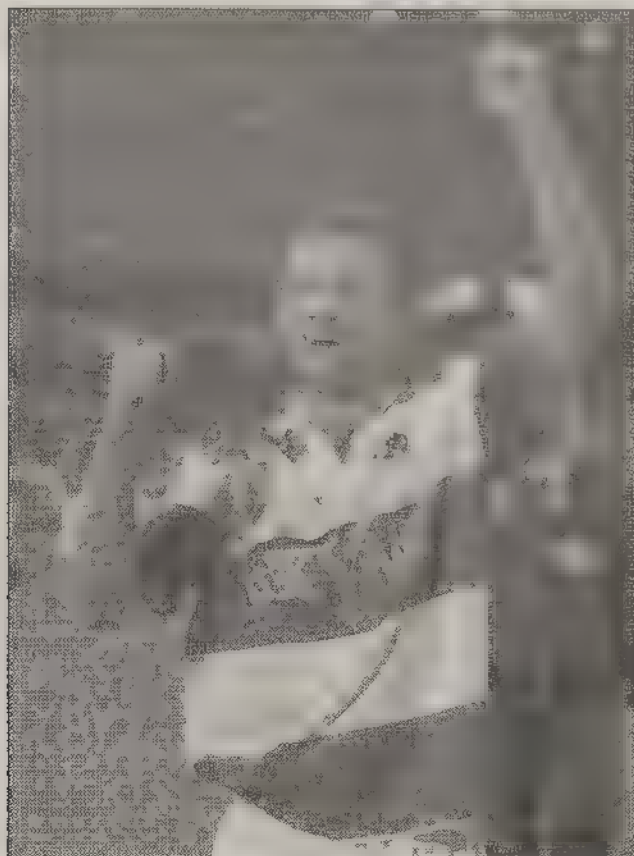
NSL CLUB - Melbourne Knights.

DR: How would you describe yourself as a player?

A hard-working, tenacious, disciplined team player. In the latter part of my career I've offered support to younger players. As an experienced player, I've played a development role and feel somewhat obliged to help the younger kids of this generation.

DR: From what age have you been playing this great game?

I started playing when I was nine. From the age of fourteen through to sixteen I played tennis. I then went back to the game of soccer, but took a year off to concentrate on my final year of University. I haven't taken a break since.



Ivan shown celebrating a Knights victory in the Semi-Finals a few years ago.

DR: Will the squad taste Championship glory this season?

I hope so. Realistically if we make the finals with the young and fairly small squad we have, then we have achieved something. Our first goal is to make the finals, and then anything can happen.

DR: Ivan how is the team doing on the park?

We started very well. But, at the moment we are inconsistent. The second half of the season is upon us, and with a couple of good results we should catapult into the top half of the table.

DR: And off the park?

The main reason I'm at the club is not because of any financial gain at an NSL level and particularly not at the Knights. You don't play just for the financial benefits. There is a great mix of both older and younger boys. We work for each other. The camaraderie is fantastic.

DR: The Melbourne Knights Coaching staff consists of Player-Coach Andrew Marth and Assistant Coach Luciano Trani. Who is more vocal on match day?

They are both a bit different. "Stabber" Marth is a leader on the park and is always vocal and full of encouragement. It comes natural to him. Luciano is the tactician on match day.

DR: What is your most memorable soccer moment?

Scoring my first goal at the NSL level in an away game against the Brisbane Strikers. The party that followed that evening was incredible. It was at the Intercontinental Pub. It was a double celebration because we won.

DR: Can you describe your passion for playing?

It's like drugs. It's an addiction. The passion's great - just enjoying the winning feeling with mates.

DR: Do you have aspirations to break into European football?

None what-so-ever. My career

has always been outside of soccer. My priority has always been to watch my soccer career grow, while developing myself outside of soccer and becoming an Engineer

DR: Rate your own soccer skills out of 10.

You'll have to ask my coaches.

DR: Is it disappointing to see crowd number dwindling at League clubs, including Knights?

Absolutely. My family and I have been involved with the club since I was three. The first generation of my community has supported the club. Only death or illness will stop them supporting the game. But, the generation of this era has failed to support the game. I only hope that my kids grow up and still have a game to support.

DR: Is the talent drain harming the local game?

It may have something to do with it. But, the problem is caused more by mismanagement at the top of the game. It is run by incompetent businessmen with personal agendas. Soccer, as a business, should be run properly irrespective of having a product to sell or not. At the moment they can't market it, to sell it

DR: What will it take for Australia to be World Soccer Champions?

Soccer Australia needs to be run by an independent business orientated bunch of people. If we can get it to run properly at the top, the rest will sort itself out. Once we sort this out, we need to get Australia's international players more involved in the game.

Don't organize international games locally. We need to base ourselves in Europe and play as many games as possible against quality opposition.

DR: What league do you rate as the world's best?

The Italian and Spanish Leagues are by far more superior technically. But, for the viewer and consumer the most exciting is the English Premier League.

DR: If you could play for any team in the world, which one would it be?

The "Wednesday Knights". It's a team made up of financial planners, advertising gurus, jewelers, sales reps, and friends who play a bit of social soccer. Apparently for me to get a guernsey, I need to drink and eat more.

DR: What are the qualities of a good coach?

Excellent communication, and the ability to get the best out of each individual.

DR: In one word describe Player/Coach Andrew Marth.

The man? Hard.
The coach? Demanding.

DR: Who is the funniest character in the game today?

A close tie between Steve Horvat and Luciano Trani.

DR: What do you do in your "downtime"?

What downtime? I spend nine hours a day at "Cryovac" working as an Engineer. I then go straight to

training for a couple of hours, then home to eat and read my mail. Then it's lights out. There's no downtime - that's my life.

DR: What is the best (or perhaps worst) excuse you've heard someone use for missing training?

Zoran Markovski told Vid Horvat that he couldn't come to training because he was working the drive-through at McDonalds selling burgers. The sad thing is Vid Horvat believed him!



Melbourne Knights defender Ivan Jolic in action.

DR: Do you know of any pre-match mishaps (missing players, two left boots, etc)?

A player that was on the bench was asked to come on, but wasn't wearing his Guernsey and had to go into the dressing rooms to get it

DR: Any early predictions for season 2002-2003?

In no particular order these teams will make the Top 6.

- Perth Glory.
- Olympic Sharks.
- Newcastle.
- Adelaide Force.
- Parramatta Power.
- and of course, the Knights.

DR: Who is the last person you would like to be stuck in an elevator with?

Luciano Trani, because there would be too much soccer talk.

DR: If you uncorked a genie in a bottle, what would you wish for?

Happiness, health, and success.

DR: If you could travel back in time, where would you go?

To the early 1900's, because I would have loved to have experienced and lived through a World War. It was an amazing feat for those that lived through it.

DR: If you could choose any

actor to play you in a movie, who would it be?

Bruce Willis. sharp, action-packed and always on the go.

DR: What is your favourite late night snack?

Dinner for me is always a late night snack. Usually it's a can of tuna, whatever variety.

DR: Which teammate do you refuse to share a room with?

Lubo Lapsansky and Adrian Cervinski, because I don't like sleeping with two chimneys.

DR: Which teammate could do with a new wardrobe?

Daniel Vasilevski, because everything he wears seems to be too small. I could have sworn snake skin was out a long time ago

DR: Which member of your squad would top Cleo's most eligible bachelor list?

Daniel Vasilevski.

DR: Who would you trade places with for a day?

Bill Gates or Hugh Hefner

DR: What is the biggest misconception about sportsmen?

That we eat the right foods, don't drink alcohol, and are always role models 24 hours a day.

DR: If you could have any supernatural power, what would it be?

The ability to print money, or pick the weekend's quadrella numbers.

DR: What animal (or thing) best describes your personality?

A Cheetah. It's disciplined, always alive, is fast, active, and has an organized manner about its survival ("and it's all in the name").

DR: Best hangover cure?

Another beer

DR: Favourite holiday destination?

Thailand.

DR: Do you have any hidden talents (that you can share with us)?

I'm a good cook. My tuna-pastas are of a different class.

DR: What gourmet cuisines can you whip up in the kitchen?

Anything you like, but my tuna risotto is the best.

DR: Worst haircut in the league?

Nick Sabljak's mullet.

DR: Which famous person have you been told you look like?

Chris Tarrant from the Collingwood Football club

DR: What is the best ingredient for a good night out?

Good company.

DR: Complete this sentence "Love is..."

Love is happiness and an easy-going relationship.

DR: What is your biggest fear?

Heights.

DR: What ring tone do you



Daniel Vasilevski: A candidate for CLEO Bachelor of the year in Jolics opinion.

have on your mobile?

Standard

DR: If you were a bird, whose head would you poo on and why?

Previous Coaches and Board Members who doubted I could come back from a serious groin injury a couple of years back.

DR: What is the most expensive item of clothing you own?

I just got back from Thailand - most things were \$5 specials!

DR: Do you have any bad habits?

I bite my nails, and don't wash up after making dinner

DR: Are you the first or last to leave the change rooms after a game?

The last. I ice every part of my body.



Jolic would love to trade places with Mr Playboy Hugh Hefner for the day.

DR: What gets you up in the mornings?

My body clock. I'll be up at 7.00am irrespective of what time I go to bed.

DR: What is the first thing you do when you arrive home?

Throw my dirty, stinking soccer clothes in the washing machine, and proceed to eat dinner.

DR: How would you spend your last \$50?

I'll try to find the next winner at Moonee Valley or Flemington racers.

DE JESUS TO STAY TA TA TO DEVILS?

By Graham Cooke

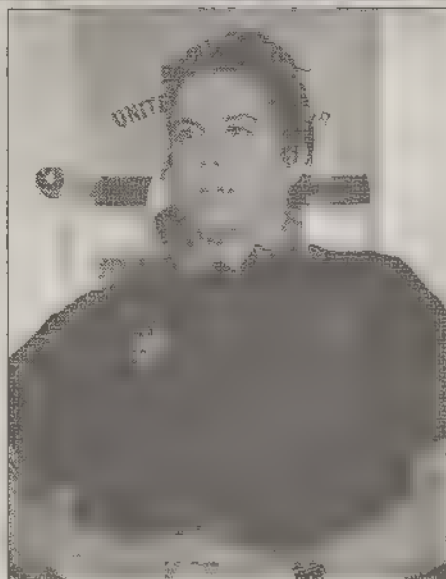
Attacking midfielder Ivo de Jesus has apparently played his last game for the Belconnen Blue Devils in the NSW Premier League, but officials insist he is not quitting the club.

In a bizarre twist to the saga of de Jesus, who was hailed as Belconnen's most important signing during the winter, he will not play under first-team coach Lino Fiorese, but might train and play with the youth team, and continue to do promotional work for the Devils off the field.

The former National League player – and a crowd favourite when he turned out for the now defunct Canberra Cosmos – had made just two appearances, both off the bench, for the Blue Devils, and it appeared his patience had worn thin.

Fiorese said he did not believe de Jesus had reached sufficient levels of fitness and that he needed to "put in more" at training.

The player countered by saying he had never



Ivo De Jesus: Has been on the outer for NSW Premier League club Belconnen Blue Devils.

been fitter and was obviously upset when he was not even included in the squad for the recent home game with Rockdale City Suns.

De Jesus obviously wants to stay in Canberra and is prepared to bide his time on the sidelines. Still in his mid-20s, it seems unlikely he will be satisfied with premature retirement for long.

With 10 players on the injury list, the coach will come under increasing pressure to make peace with his dissident star.

Meanwhile Fiorese lashed out at critics of his decision to include 37-year-old Marko Perinovic in the first-team line up, after the striker scored a hat trick in the 3-3 draw with Rockdale.

"I have no doubt he is one of the best players ever produced in Canberra and if he can still get on the score sheet and trouble people out there, then he will always be in my side," Fiorese said.

"There is no-one better than Marko to do the kind of job I need – he wins balls in the air and puts his body on the line. He is a different kind of striker, but you need his type in this league if you are going to get results."

WOLVES PAIR FINED

Wollongong coach Ron Corry and midfielder Dino Mennillo have received fines and been handed suspended sentences following an incident in last week's National League match against the Football Kings.

During the heated 1-1 draw, Corry was dismissed from the technical area after arguing with a linesman over an offside call. Mennillo was then red-carded for dissent.

After a NSL tribunal meeting last Thursday, Corry was fined \$1000 and received an 18-month suspended sentence.

Mennillo was fined \$500 and received a five match suspended sentence. He already has to serve a one

match suspension for being red-carded.

Wolves team manager Ray Dowd was fined \$500 for his verbal altercation with officials.



Ron Corry: Wolves coach was fined \$1000 for his dismissal in New Zealand.

WOLLONGONG NEWS

By Otto Bader

Rossi Leads The Way

Robert Rossi, the newly appointed General Manager of the Wolves, has brought enthusiasm with fresh ideas to the club. At 42, Rossi emerges as a local product of soccer – Port Kembla junior player and spent some years with Dapto as a senior player. After soccer, Robert worked in promotions and marketing as well as a volunteer supporter of the Wolves for years.

His immediate aim is to lift the profile of the soccer club – mainly to forge

closer links with the local soccer community

Wolves Skipper Talks

Five draws in 17 games cost Stuart Young's team dearly – one might say 10 points wasted.

However the boys are hanging in, surprisingly still only one point out of the top six.

Latest new recruit Ben Blake had a solid game, his first in over a year, after returning to Wollongong.

Checking through the squad now with Ben Blake, six of the regulars from the Wolves title winning side are

still with the club. Not too many players movement are likely considering financial restraints of most clubs before the new soccer season 2004.

At present fiery midfield player Dino Mennillo is suspended with coach Ron Corry having to reshuffle his starting eleven. Eight matches to go and theoretically the Wolves could sneak into the top six, luck and help with other results is needed.

Training Start Promising ---

Shellharbour City soccer coach Barney King was pleasantly surprised at the high levels of fitness of players,

clearly indicating that they are serious as the coach of success in the forthcoming season.

New signings beside of the regulars from past year are expected to strengthen the squad quite substantial – Brad Tuohy and Adam White formerly Kiama and David Chilcott former Marconi and Wolves Youth grade player will add depth to the club's squad. Several other new faces at training are a testament of Shellharbour's success making the public to take notice and attract players.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE 2002/03

NORTHERN DIVISION RESULTS - ROUND 18

SATURDAY 18 JANUARY 2003

Northern Spirit Youth v Sydney United Youth

Match postponed due to extreme heat

Olympic Sharks Youth 2 Canberra Deakin 3
(Camilleri 41' 76') (Spaleta 15' 32' 70')

AIS 6 Parramatta Power Youth 3
(Casey 16', Celesti 19', Bosnar 62', Nedeljkovic 73' 81', Deegan 90'+)

SUNDAY 19 JANUARY 2003

Wollongong Wolves Youth 1 Newcastle United Youth 2
(Bartlett 38') (Wallace 68', Mensah 74')

Marconi Mustangs v ACTAS

Match postponed due to Canberra bushfire crisis

BYE - Marconi Stallions Youth

BYE - QAS

NORTHERN DIVISION - ROUND 18

	P	W	D	B	L	F	A	Pts
Canberra Deakin	17	8	5	2	4	44	26	29
AIS	12	8	3	4	1	25	10	27
Parramatta Power Youth	15	8	3	3	4	38	25	27
Newcastle United Youth	16	7	5	2	4	28	21	26
Wollongong Wolves Youth	15	6	5	2	4	35	23	23
Northern Spirit Youth	14	6	4	2	4	14	10	22
Sydney United Youth	13	5	3	3	5	29	20	18

Olympic Sharks Youth	15	4	6	2	5	17	17	18
ACTAS	13	5	2	3	6	20	24	17
QAS	15	4	3	3	8	18	37	15
Marconi Stallions Youth	14	3	4	4	7	15	34	13
Marconi Mustangs	15	0	3	2	12	6	42	3

NORTHERN DIVISION FIXTURES - ROUND 19

POSTPONED MATCH FROM RD 11 -

To be played on Wed 22 Jan 2003

AIS Vs Northern Spirit Youth

Time: 7.00 pm Venue: AIS Soccer Field

FRIDAY 24 JANUARY 2003

ACTAS Vs Wollongong Wolves Youth

Time: 5.00 pm Venue: Hawker Oval

Newcastle United Youth Vs Olympic Sharks Youth

Time: 5.15 pm Venue: Energy Australia Stadium

SATURDAY 25 JANUARY 2003

QAS Vs AIS

Time: 4.35 pm Venue: Ballymore Stadium

SUNDAY 26 JANUARY 2003

Sydney United Youth Vs Marconi Mustangs

Time: 4.00 pm Venue: Sydney United Sports Centre

Parramatta Power Youth Vs Marconi Stallions Youth

Time: 4.10 pm Venue: Parramatta Stadium

BYE - Canberra Deakin

BYE - Northern Spirit Youth

Lazaridis wants Leeds move

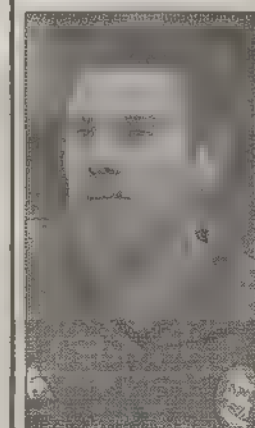
Socceroo Stan Lazaridis hopes his current club Birmingham can agree terms with Leeds United over a touted transfer.

Elland Road boss Terry Venables is keen to renew the association he had with Lazaridis while in charge of the Australian national team just over five years ago, but Birmingham is believed to be asking for \$2.8 million, with Leeds only keen to pay half that figure.

If Lazaridis does make the move to Yorkshire, he will join fellow Australians Harry Kewell, Mark Viduka and Paul Okon.

Lazaridis, who has previously played in the English Premier League with West Ham, told *The Sunday Telegraph* he would love to work under Venables again.

"Terry is the sort of coach players love being around. He's the sort of guy you'd be prepared to die for," Lazaridis said.



Socceroo Stan Lazaridis has hinted his desire to play at Elland Road this season.

"He's the best manager I've ever played under and he always got the best out of me when he was in charge of the Socceroos. Players warm to him and I personally can't praise him highly enough."

While he has had his share of game time so far this season, Lazaridis added that he expects the recent signings of the likes of Stephen Clemence, Christophe Dugarry and Jamie Clapham to damage his first team chances.

"If I'm not a part of [coach] Steve Bruce's plans and if a club like Leeds comes in, you can't dismiss it. It's an exciting thought when you consider the Aussie connection that already exists at the club."

"It would be great to be a part of that. Birmingham have to make a decision on whether they want me to stay or go. They are asking a lot for me. Realistically they'd be lucky to get a third of what they want."

"I would have thought if they really wanted me to stay they'd have offered me something by now. It's been hard for me. I've been left in limbo and mentally it's beginning to affect me."

"I realise the new signings will push a few players out of the picture - and I believe I'll be one of them. But I've got no animosity towards Steve Bruce."

"He's given me plenty of game time this season and had he not played me there wouldn't have been any interest from the likes of Leeds."



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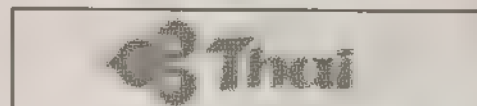
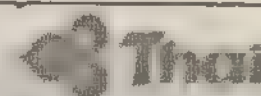
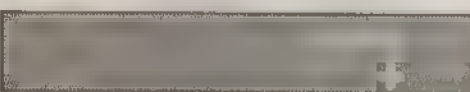
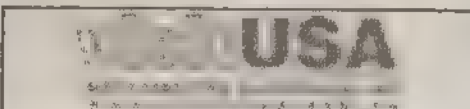
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NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

After Round 18	TOTAL							PTS	HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	BYE	F	A		P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
PERTH GLORY	17	13	1	3	1	35	13	40	9	8	0	1	22	6	8	4	2	2	18	16
OLYMPIC SHARKS	17	12	2	3	1	35	20	38	9	8	0	1	17	4	8	5	1	2	13	7
SOUTH MELBOURNE	16	8	3	5	2	24	21	27	9	7	2	0	20	8	7	1	1	5	4	13
NEWCASTLE UNITED	17	6	5	6	1	26	18	23	8	5	2	1	18	6	9	1	3	5	6	11
PARRAMATTA POWER	16	6	4	6	1	23	19	22	8	3	2	3	11	11	8	3	2	3	12	8
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	16	6	4	6	2	26	22	22	8	4	3	1	15	8	8	2	1	5	11	14
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	17	4	7	6	1	20	24	19	8	2	5	1	8	8	9	2	2	5	12	16
BRISBANE STRIKERS	17	5	4	8	1	28	33	19	8	2	1	5	11	18	9	3	3	3	17	17
SYDNEY UNITED	16	5	3	8	2	14	22	18	8	5	1	2	10	7	8	0	2	6	4	15
FOOTBALL KINGZ	16	4	5	7	1	18	22	17	7	2	4	1	9	7	9	2	1	6	9	15
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	16	4	5	7	2	27	39	17	9	4	2	3	16	21	7	0	3	4	10	18
NORTHERN SPIRIT	14	4	3	7	1	17	27	15	6	2	1	3	6	10	10	2	1	7	8	17
MARCONI STALLIONS	15	4	2	9	2	20	24	14	6	2	1	3	9	11	9	2	1	6	8	16

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 1
(C Pelosi 40 pen)
BRISBANE STRIKERS 0

Referee: Matthew Breeze. Crowd: 1,836. Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium.
Teams: ADELAIDE CITY FORCE: Stancic, Fyfe, Kovacic, Petrovic (Rees 84), Paterson, Veart, T. Bridgman (Smetz 91), Kemp, T. L. (Pelosi), P. (L. G. 78), Buga.
Subs Not Used: Acevski (gk).
BRISBANE STRIKERS: Keaton, Stelarcic, M. Kari, M. Loren, Lathorne 68, Grierson, Rech (Webber 63), Laybutt, P. (H. Heath Rose, McKay 46), Roche.
Subs Not Used: Batic (gk).
Yellow Cards: C. Veart (AFC) 90, J. McKay (BS) 76, A. Webber (BS) 89.

NORTHERN SPIRIT 1
(N Spencer 70)
SYDNEY UNITED 0

Referee: Craig Zetter. Crowd: 2,016. Venue: North Sydney Oval.
Teams: NORTHERN SPIRIT: Henderson, Watts, Spencer, Tobin, Ferguson (McDermott 73), Macallister (Kwasnik 88), Hutchinson, Tomasevic, Fisher, Wilkinson, Osman (Richter 75).
Subs Not Used: Rex (gk).
SYDNEY UNITED: Ivesa, Pavic, Bilokapic, Barrett, Jedinak (Lukac 82), Babic (Menapi 70), Collina, M. Santalab, Brain, B. Santalab, Deur (Domanis 59).
Subs Not Used: Perosh (gk).
Yellow Cards: V. Tomasevic (NS) 36, J. Watts (NS) 54, P. Bilokapic (SU) 24, D. Barrett (SU) 54, B. Pavic (SU) 58.
Red Cards: B. Pavic (SU) 77.

SOUTH MELBOURNE 0
PERTH GLORY 2
(A Gumprecht 24, B Despotovski 81)

Referee: Perry Mur. Crowd: 11,173. Venue: Perth Oval.
Teams: PERTH GLORY: Petkovic, Horsley (Caceras 85), Harnwell, Hassell, Gumprecht, Miller, Mrdja (Despotovski 67), Junior, Mori, Pryce (Byrnes 76), Tarka.
Subs Not Used: Matassa (gk).
SOUTH MELBOURNE: Galekovic, Iosifidis, Durakovic, Panopoulos, Coveny, Buljan, Susa (Baird 63), Lia (Tolios 63), Murdoch (Trimboli 75), Kisorbo, Damianos.
Subs Not Used: Anastasiadis (gk).
Cautions: J. Harnwell (PG) 75.

FOOTBALL KINGZ 0
OLYMPICS SHARKS 1
(A Milicic 61)

Referee: Simon Michael. Crowd: 2,868. Venue: Toyota Park.
Teams: OLYMPIC SHARKS: Borror, Soars, Kenler, Lunc, Srho, Ponderak, Milicic (Owens 87), Paris 90, Halpin, North Harris, Porter 70, Ismida.
Subs Not Used: Hughes (gk).
FOOTBALL KINGZ: Utting, Atkinson (Taylor 71), Perry, Jackson, Campbell, (L.ovic 71), Vahos, Ngata, deGregorio, Mitazawa, Pritchett (Turner 76), Donoso.
Subs Not Used: Bannantine (gk).
Cautions: T. Halpin (OS) 32, R. deGregorio (FK) 26.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 0
PARRAMATTA POWER 4
(J Buonavoglia 14, 72, B Maloney 39, P Cardozo 75)

Referee: Mark Shield. Crowd: 3,093. Venue: Knights Stadium.
Teams: MELBOURNE KNIGHTS: Jonn, Vargas, Kovacic, Horvat, Marth, Vasilevski, Rocco (Porkowski 46), Bunic, Sabliak, Fa'arodo, Pelikan (Biscayzacu 62).
Subs Not Used: Cervinski, Hrehoresin (gk).
PARRAMATTA POWER: Ready, Ceccoli, Orlic, Beauchamp, O'Sullivan, Maloney, Selapacidis (Cardozo 67), Zorbas (Thompson 78), Buonavoglia, Renaud (Langdon 80), Elrich.
Subs Not Used: Vukovic (gk).
Cautions: D. Vasilevski (MK) 43.

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 2
(R Stanton 30, N Sekulovski 69)
NEWCASTLE UNITED 2
(J Griffiths 5, 92 pen)

Referee: Eddie Lennie. Crowd: 2,637. Venue: WIN Stadium.
Teams: WOLLONGONG WOLVES: Crews, Austin, Stanton, Cervinski, Castro (Aliffi 83), Lyons, Young, Sekulovski (Heffernan 75), Farah, Huxley, Blake.
Subs Not Used: Wells, Whalan (gk).
NEWCASTLE UNITED: Beltrame, Roberts, Zoricich (Hughes 83), Bingley, Dodd, Wilson, J. Griffiths, Tsekenis, Schirmpa, Masi, Wheelhouse (R. Griffiths 64).
Subs Not Used: Johnson, Willis (gk).
Cautions: D. Cervinski (WW) 65, R. Stanton (WW) 85, M. Wilson (NU) 29.

PLAYER OF THE WEEK



JOHNNY BUONAVOGLIA
(Parramatta Power)

It seems as though the luck for the Parramatta Power has changed in a big way after the side recorded its sixth victory of the season in Melbourne thumping the Knights four-nil in their own domain. Parramatta dominated the match from start to finish with one man again taking the spotlight in bagging two goals for the yellow and blues. 27-year-old striker Johnny Buonavoglia once again the leader of the pack scoring two goals to help his side cruise to an easy victory.

The first of his two goals showcased what a live-wire striker the 165cm former Newcastle star is after he latched onto an error made by Knights skipper Marth, the lynchpin ran 20metres before slotting the ball home. It was Johnny B's fifth goal of the year and from these reports will certainly not be his last.

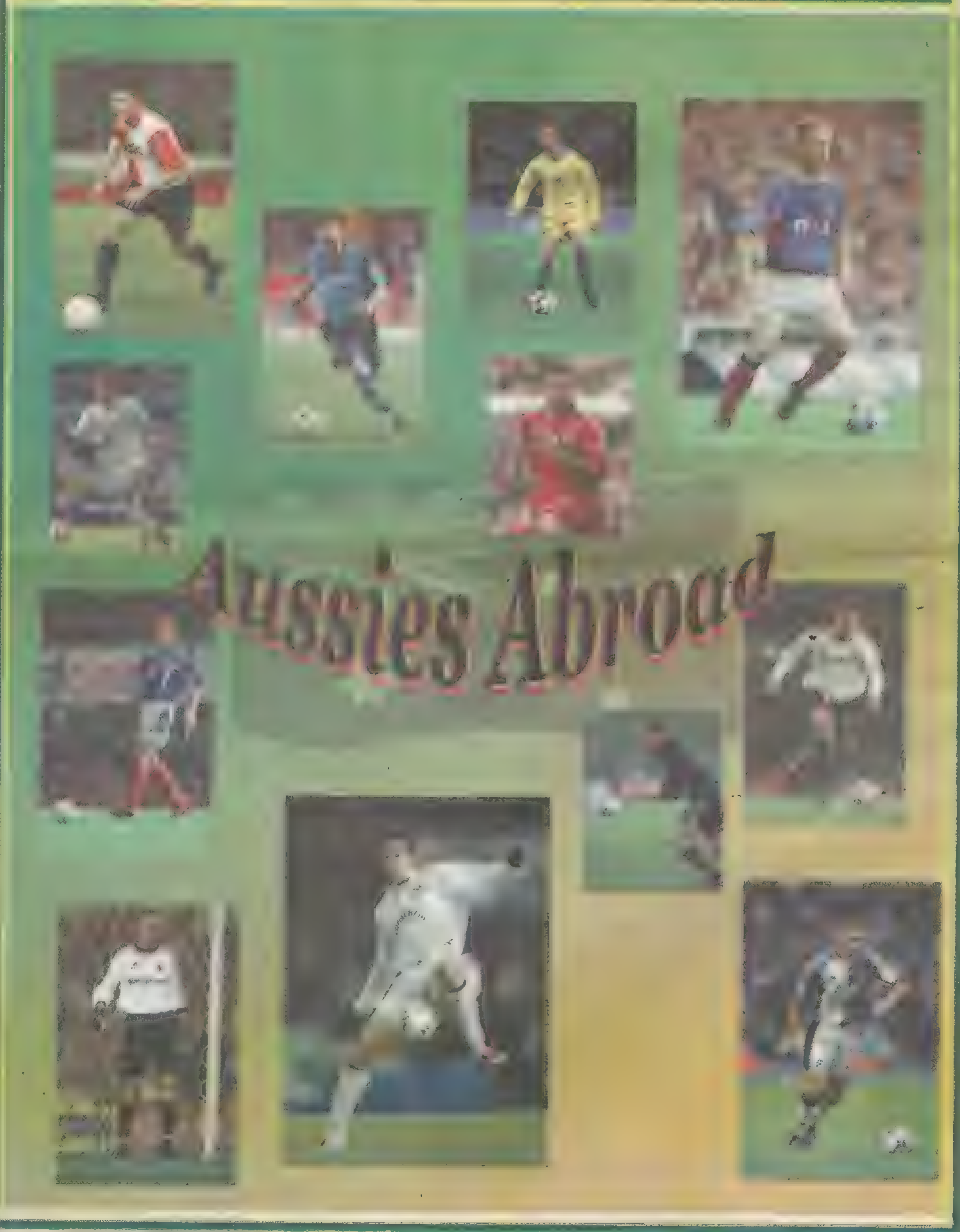
After failing to start at the introduction of the season, Buonavoglia will most certainly fair in the remainder of the Power's matches with performances such as these.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

Name	Club	Total
GRIFFITHS Joel	Newcastle United	13
MORI Damian	Perth Glory	12
PELIKAN Anthony	Melbourne Knights	9
YOUNG Stuart	Wollongong Wolves	9
RECH Fernando	Brisbane Strikers	7
BROSQUE Alex	Marconi Stallions	7
ROCHE Anthony	Brisbane Strikers	7
MILICIC Ante	Olympic Sharks	7

BYE - MARCONI STALLIONS

Photo Special on Aussies Abroad



Thierry Henry — Arsenal's 100 Man

Thierry Henry

From The Dressing Sheds

By Mark Stavroulakis

First it was Charley Villani, then it was Raul Blanco, and now joining the ranks amongst the coaching unemployment line is former Melbourne Knights Assistant-Coach Luciano Trani.

It seems as though mid NSL season has seen a rise in the number of coaches leaving clubs due to poor results.

Trani was a Melbourne Knight man through and through and worked very hard in scouting potential players for the squad.

Lon was spotted many times at Sydney's Parklea headquarters during the National Titles scouting 15&16



The Melbourne Knights have parted company with Assistant-Coach Luciano Trani.

year olds for the club and was quoted in the 'Herald Sun' as saying "I left my day job to join the Knights and I was clocking up 70-75 hours a week for the club while accepting a pay cut at the same time."

It is quite rare that clubs do sack assistants as they majority of the time you will see them depart if the main coach has been sacked or has resigned.

Being situated in Melbourne, Trani will most probably be targeted by Victorian Premier League clubs and could herald a new coaching beginning as the number one man at a club in Melbourne very soon.

As for Player/Manager Andrew Marth, recent results have told the story that if the 33-year-old does not attain credible results within the next few weeks, we could yet see another coaching casualty.

Known for the 'hard-man' approach to the game, Marth will not go down without a fight so he warned Andy is on

the loose and will not take no prisoners.

Parramatta Power last week released two youngsters from its first grade squad and have proposed to sign on a player during the transfer window season with defender Luke Casserely leading the way in signing for Parramatta.

Youngsters Peter Gavaghan and Bradley Groves were both released from the club with both sets of players going their own ways in their careers.

Gavaghan, a promising midfielder who graduated from the NSWIS has decided to give the game up all together and has opted to go back to university to finish off his studies.

While Groves, a former Leeds United youth player has agreed to terms with the Spirit and will try and resurrect his career with Lawrie McKinnon's squad.

After spending two seasons at the Power, Groves hardly faired in the starting line-up and in latest developments fell offside in coach Nick T's plans who was told to train with the youth squad for the rest of the season.

"If it wasn't for the support of others at Parramatta Power, I may have chucked it in" said Groves. "I am grateful to Lawrie McKinnon for again putting faith in me, and I look forward to pushing for a first grade berth at Spirit. I have been invited back to Britain in the off-season and Spirit can also open doors for me", said Groves.

-It was pleasing to see former Joey's striker Dylan Macallister back on the pad-dock as the 20-year-old played eighty-five minutes in his first game back since his transfer saga with Swiss club FC Aarau.

'Big Dylan' played well and from all reports was happy to have finally played a competitive match after six months.

-ABSW's roving eye stated that during last week's match at WIN Stadium between the Wollongong Wolves and Newcastle United, a certain Wolves fan had 'a go' with United coach Ian Crook.

A heated verbal conversation broke out between Crook and the Wolves fan in a match that saw Newcastle gain a valuable point thanks to a suspect 92nd minute penalty scored by Joel Griffiths.

Wolves coach Ron Corry kept a low profile about this incident after he was fined earlier in the week after remonstrating with a linesman over an offside call during their

clash against the Football Kingz a few weeks back.

This just goes to show how hot of a property young Everton star Wayne Rooney is after the 17-year-old put pen to paper to a three-year deal with the Blues.

Quotes from both coach David Moyes and Deputy Chairman Bill Kenwright summed up how delighted they were in signing the future English international.

"Give us a bit of time to develop him and England should have a future star in the making - it breaks my heart as a Scotsman to say that, but it's a fact," Moyes stated.



Simon Colosimo has returned to Australia in search of an NSL contract.

While Kenwright added: "Unfortunately you can only sign a 17-year-old for three years - we tried 33 and a half"

-Sydney United were handed a hefty fine last week by Soccer Australia for bringing the game into disrepute during their round 14 clash against Newcastle United in Newcastle.

\$40,000 was the damage set upon the club as drastic majors have been set by the side to limit bad behaviour from their fans.

Newcastle United was fined \$2,500 for their part in the melee which left one man injured with a suspected broken jaw and two security guards injured.

In a bid to stamp out bad behavior at our soccer pitches in Australia, Soccer Australia has put forward that random bag searches will take part at every soccer pitch in Australia, for security reasons.

-One man that has certainly turned the tide for the Strikers has been head-coach John Kosminski.

After spending the majority of the season on the bottom of the ladder, 'Kossie' now finds himself close to a top six spot.

However, the one time Arsenal player stated to 'The Advertiser' last week that he isn't sure whether he will remain in charge of the squad next season?

An interesting piece nonetheless, especially the way things are going for the club at the moment, a top six finish will see 'Kossie' stay on for another few years.

-He was regarded as one of Australia's best youth products but has failed to make an impact overseas. Former Socceroo defender Simon

Colosimo has returned to Australia following his overseas adventures that saw the former Carleton player play in both the English and Belgian leagues.

Having spent two years, one with English side Manchester City, the other with Belgian side Royal Antwerp, Simon is hoping to resurrect his career with an NSL club this season.

Already interests from the Olympic Sharks, Perth Glory and former club South Melbourne have been seen, but nothing has eventuated yet for the former VIS graduate.

-Sydney United is set to lose three first grade players who will be loaned to Malaysian club Johor.

Strikers Daniel Watkins and Jon Angelucci and play-maker Gabriel Mendez will all spend the rest of the season at the club which will no doubt hurt Culina's squad.

Former Canberra Cosmos player Ivan Zelic will also make the step up to Johor which is said to be coached by former AIS head coach Ron 'Smudger' Smith.

All three players have had experience in playing with Johor at some stage of their careers.

One player already targeted by Branko to replace Angelucci and Watkins has been former Wolves striker Sean Babic.

A former United junior, Babic looks set to agree to clubs terms within the next few weeks. His presence will certainly add more spark to the attacking line-up of United as the side looks set to capture a hopeful top six finishing.

-Rumor has it that a top NSL side is set to become semi-professional as of next season. Currently consisting of a number of quality players, the club is looking towards slashing their already big player budget and with the possibility of going semi-professional will certainly do that. The question though is, how many of those 'quality' players will stay on if it does go semi professional?

-It's brilliant to see a huge youth tournament being held in our very own backyard next month straight from Italy.

The 'Italia San Marco (Gradisca) Qualification Tournament will be held from the 28th of January - 2nd of February in both Sydney & Canberra.

The tournament has been going on strong for 17 years now held in the Italian city of Gradisca and has produced a number quality players and has always had quality teams enter the competition.

Due to the success of this tournament, the officials from Gradisca decided to make the competition more widespread thus giving Oceania a chance to play-off for a valuable spot in one of Europe's prestigious youth tournaments.

Australian sides such as the NSWIS and the AIS have both entered the tournament and have come back with positive feedback from a well-run and highly professional set-up, but now eight U17 youth sides will now have the task of getting that vital spot in going to Italy in April this year.

Last Wednesday night at the Marconi Club saw the launch of

the Gradisca Tournament in which Marconi have kindly offered the services of their ground for the big event.

Present at the launch was the man behind the idea, Lorenzo Pastrello whose passion for soccer has been second to none. Soccer Australia chairman



Rumor has it that Con Boutsianis could make the move to an NSL club this season?

Remo Nogarotto, Socceroo coach-Frank Farina, Marconi's new coach Rale Basic and the Stallions trio of Young Socceroo striker Alex Brosque, crafty striker Eric Anabalón and rising star Paul Cotte were all on show.

No doubt a brilliant idea put forward by Pastrello and his group of soccer fanatics to bring the world game to our very own shores.

ABSW will keep the readers updated about the tournament as it kick's off on the 28th of this month.

-Dead ball specialist Con Boutsianis is rumored to be joining an NSL club this season? Speculations that both the Adelaide City Force and

South Melbourne have joined the race in wanting to sign the former Socceroo who could prove to be a vital asset for any club come NSL finals time.

-Remember this name Serkan Oksuz.

At the start of this seasons NSL, ABSW put forward a list of names with their respective club of who to watch out for in season 2002/03.

Under the Melbourne Knights banner, ABSW put Serkan's name and alas news has generated that the 16-year-old striker is off to Germany for a three-week trial with Bundesliga side Borussia Moenchengladbach.

The pacy striker has been noted as being one of the youngest players ever to sign a professional contract with the club and has been renowned as being one of Australia's best talents.



Serkan Oksuz: Knights youngster jettied off to Germany in search of an overseas contract last week.

ROUND 18

17-1-03

Adelaide City Force - Brisbane Strikers

Northern Spirit - Sydney United

18-1-03

Perth Glory - South Melbourne

19-1-03

Melbourne Knights - Parramatta Power

Wollongong Wolves - Newcastle United

Olympic Sharks - Football Kingz

Bye - Marconi Stallions

Having spotted Oksuz at the National Titles held in Parklea last year, his performances caught the eye of Australian Youth coach Ange Postecoglou who picked him for an Oceania Nations Cup tournament last year.

The former VIS graduate has unfortunately not faired in any

of the Knights games this year due to an injury to his disc in his lower back just after pre-season however has recovered as he looks forward to his German trip.

Serkan left Australian shores last Thursday bound for Germany.

MEDIA WRITES OFF REFEREES

By Stephen Duckitt

The media team headed by Craig Foster, Phil Moss and Andy Harper, thumped the NSW Referees team 5-2 at Parramatta Stadium two weeks ago before the Power's match against the Force.

With the annual fixture not being played for some time, both teams took the field in anticipation of an entertaining clash. As the match officials headed by Doug Rennie, Boyd McGregor, Robert Robertson and Geoff Leverton lead the teams out.

The referees, looking smart in black and white jerseys, were quietly confident that they could finally get one back against their media counterparts.

However the script didn't quite going to plan.

It didn't take long for them to find the back of the net. A mistake off a goal kick, allowed Andy Harper to fire the ball past NSL referee Con Diomus, for the first of his two goals.

The game then fell in a nice rhythm, provided you were supporting the media team. The referees seemed a little shell shocked and before they had realised they found themselves 3-0 down, courtesy of some strong midfield play and some quality finishing.

Skillful keeping from NYL Assistant Referee Murray Wilson and vicious defending from NSL officials Mathew Breeze and Peter Vrtovski

managed to keep the score down.

An incisive run from National Youth League referee Atila Stibinger, had all the hallmarks of a quality player, as he set up fellow NYL panellist Colin Stocks who slotted home from inside the 18 yard box. Even Craig Foster was impressed, acknowledging the skill of the youngsters.

But the joy was short lived. Just minutes later the media team had their fourth and the referees were down, but most certainly not out.

A motivating speech from Referees Coach, Robert Colombo, saw the black and whites take to the field in the second half with more confidence and enthusiasm.

However it wasn't long before the media had managed to find their fifth goal, after what can only be described as a mis-hit lob.

Under the barrage of pressure the media couldn't hold on for much longer and eventually Colin Stocks managed to knock home his and his teams second. Shortly after, the referees had a chance to pull one back when

Referee Doug Rennie ruled that Francis Awaratife had fouled in the penalty area. However Vic Gauci was unable to convert from the spot, while he and Simon Micallef snuffled the rebound.

The game was played in great spirits, with both teams welcoming the final whistle.

Perhaps next year the referees can steal the spotlight.



Former Socceroo Craig Foster starred in the Media teams victory over a select referee's squad.

ROUND 19

24-1-03

Newcastle United - Olympic Sharks

25-1-03

Brisbane Strikers - Melbourne Knights
Football Kingz - Adelaide City Force

26-1-03

Parramatta Power - Marconi Stallions
Sydney United - Perth Glory
South Melbourne - Wollongong Wolves

Bye - Northern Spirit



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NSW PREMIER LEAGUE SEASON 2002/2003

MATCH OF THE ROUND

 Blacktown City Demons	0
 Parramatta Eagles	2

By Paul Goodwin

In many ways this match of the round had it all. The sweltering conditions, however, did not lend themselves to a great spectacle and many supporters took their time drifting into the ground as they tried to avoid the searing heat.

Thankfully a strong breeze arrived just as the players returned to the arena for the second half

Two sides, both with tremendous pedigrees, faced up for what could allow one of them to maintain a challenge for top honours after both had suffered stuttering starts to the season.

The other might be left with much work still to do this season to get into a challenging position once more.

If anything, the visitors had the least to fear. They had only lost once, an unexpected narrow defeat at Fairfield, while the Demons had lost twice, the most recent at home to leaders A.P.I.A., but

countering that was a very poor record at The Gabbie.

In the end, though, Parramatta looked very classy, composed and purposeful throughout and having weathered an opening storm the visitors were able to go on and dominate the first half and gain a crucial two goal advantage.

They then defended superbly in the second half and rarely looked troubled, despite the Demons having all the territorial advantage.

Naoki Inaya failed a late fitness test and that meant a start for Blacktown's midweek signing, Colin Luff.

But even he could not save the home side's blushes.

Luff had one great chance to strike in the first half, with Jason Holmes unable to protect his goal adequately, but the former Golden Boot winner's effort swerved wide, with the right hand side of the goal at his mercy.

By then Parramatta were already two goals up and a goal just before the break might have made all the difference for the Demons.

When Dione Valle brought down Daniel Kukucka on the edge of the box in the 18th minute, dead ball specialist Malcolm Meilak stepped up to take the free kick.

The strongly-built defender had already fully tested John Crawley five minutes earlier with a booming shot that the Demons' skipper had to tip over the bar in brilliant fashion.

But the keeper could do nothing about Meilak's free kick from 22 yards, which saw the ball fairly rocket into the roof of the Blacktown net.

Little was seen of the home side after that, apart from a poor effort from Simon Catanzaro that sailed harmlessly over the bar in the 22nd.

Meanwhile, at the other end, Nathan Rivera had already been through to face Crawley once, only to manage a tame shot right into the custodian's arms, so when he got in behind the defence two minutes later, the defence should have been prepared.

Instead, from Meilak's precision cross from the left, Rivera was able to strike from well inside the box in very positive fashion.

Rivera had a further chance in the 37th.

after getting a great pass from Mark Reveley, only to waste it, while Tony Mittiga's fine cross in the 38th allowed Ben Delicata to ghost into the box and then see his diving header flash just wide.

Blacktown made all of the second half running, but could not penetrate, though Luff did have a goal disallowed for a clear offside.

Meanwhile, Parramatta could easily have had a third when Kukucka got through to face Crawley, but the keeper saved brilliantly, twice in quick succession.

For all their forward movement in the second half it always looked like the Eagles were in control and the more likely to score on the counter attack.

They played a very direct style and their speed and running off the ball did most of the damage.

After the game Demons' coach Brian Brown was openly disappointed, but gave full marks to Parramatta for being by far the better team on the night.

"We went into the game with two players carrying knocks, but I only knew about one of those before we started and I was forced to make changes at half time."

The damage was already done by then, of course.

"My defenders were there all right, in the right zone, but they did not shadow the Parramatta players anywhere near closely enough," Brown went on.

"Maybe we need to bring in some of the younger players now because this team is just not firing at the moment," he concluded.

A beaming John Calleja said that his players knew that this was their bogey side and they had spent a lot of time during the week planning how to tackle the match and it all went according to plan. Tactically Calleja and his men got it just right.

"We were very solid," he said. "We knew our record on the ground was not good, but we were determined to rectify that."

"The defence was very sound, everyone worked hard and followed the instructions to the letter."

It was a big win for the Eagles, their first at the Gabbie in a very long time and certainly the first in the Premier League.

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS0

PARRAMATTA EAGLES2

(M Meilak 19', N Rivera 23')

at Gabbie Stadium, Blacktown

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS: 1 John Crawley (C), 5 Ben Willard, 15 Patrick Gatt, 12 Dane Hokin (2 Paul Yates 46), Dione Valle (13 Steve Riches 46), 6 David Reid, 7 Simon Catanzaro, 9 Kain Rastali, 11 Jim Nikas, 4 Luke Roodenburg (24 Bishara Stephan 73), Colin Luff

Subs not used: 33 Brian Vanaga, 20 Nik Jelc (RGK)

Coach: Brian Brown

PARRAMATTA EAGLES: 1 Jason Holmes (C), 2 Michael Kladis, 5 Mark Reveley, 4 Malcolm Meilak (6 Daniel Borg 73), 3 Geoff Dwyer, 18 Paul O'Grady, 10 Anthony Mittiga, 11 Matt O'Shea, 15 Ben Delicata, 8 Daniel Kukucka, 14 Nathan Rivera (9 Anthony Mondello 85)

Sub not used: 22 Ben Panecasio (RGK), 7 Mauricio Islas, 12 Tim Gedn II

Coach: John Calleja

Referee: Nick Asargiotis

Assistant Referees: Sunny Afshar and Heidi Breeze

Fourth Official: Wayne Lenardon

Yellow Cards: Blacktown City N Parramatta Eagles Jason Holmes 84



Paul O'Grady (left) and Jimmy Nikas (right) challenge for the ball.

SOCCER NSW

EDITING: Adam Mark
PRODUCTION: Daniel Kuznow, Elly Vea,
Mary Quayle
WRITERS: Greg Stock, Paul Goodwin
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SOCCER NSW
SOCCER NSW
Valentine Sports Park
235-257 Meurants Lane,
GLENWOOD, NSW, 2768
Phone: (02) 9629 1800

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SOCCER NSW



Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2 Penrith Panthers 1

By Greg Stock

For the third time in as many weeks, Bonnyrigg striker Aaron Burgess was again the major difference for his team, this time scoring two goals to sink the hard working Panthers outfit 2-1 at The Serbian Centre.

Since his move from Northern Spirit earlier this month, he has proved himself to be a revelation to an indifferent White Eagles forward line, scoring five goals in the past three matches to take his side to within a win of the top five.

While his two goals on Saturday night weren't all that flash, he does have a funny habit of bobbing up in the right place at the right time and finding the net, and that to a striker, that is everything.

A strong start by Bonnyrigg gave them the early ascendancy with Burgess finding

the target in the 11th minute from a well-worked move with Kindness Agwu. The visitors looked very sluggish during the first half and it took 'razzing' from coach Tony Rasmussen during the break for them to make inroads, but when they did, they looked capable and at times threatening.

Danny Hinton found them an equalizer six minutes after the resumption but a lack of confidence in their front third cost them the opportunity of extending that lead. Two fingertip saves from Fernando Greco and a shot by El Ah, which cannoned into the crossbar their only reward for a twenty-minute period where they completely dominated the home side.

But just as it seemed the visitors were set to score, Burgess struck, throwing himself at a loose ball inside the penalty box which took a deflection on its way to completely deceiving Chad Taylor and into the back of the net. It wasn't a shot capable of winning

'Goal of the Year', but it was a telling contribution, which seemingly sucked all the enthusiasm from the young Panthers side, who probably deserved better for their endeavors.

Apart from man of the match Burgess, substitute Joe Bruni had his best game for

weeks coming on for the injured Kindness early in the first half. Their partnership looked very exciting and given more match time is bound to produce results. For the Panthers, Luke O'Connell at sweeper was their pick while Shane Hammond also ran himself to a standstill in the midfield.



Aaron Burgess celebrating another goal.

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES 2
(A. Burgess 11' 65')
PENRITH PANTHERS1
(D Hinton 51')
at Serbian Centre, Bonnyrigg

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES: 1 Fernando Greco, 3 Mark D'Alessandro, 18 Fernando Pellegrino, 17 Mik Simonovic, 5 Tayfun Devrimol, 23 Devrim Huseyin, 7 Javier Mancino (6 Johnny Ghiso), 8 David Harding, 9 Shane Knight, 10 Kindness Agwu (11 Joe Bruni, 15 Oygur Askin), 21 Aaron Burgess
Coach: Lyube Jancev

PENRITH PANTHERS: 1 Chad Taylor, 11 Luke O'Connell, 6 Dan-e Wells, 15 Chad Lewis, 4 Ryan Noble, 26 Martin McCaffery, 21 Luke Boyo, 17 Danie McCann, 13 Jason Sciberras, 10 Shane Hammond, 14 Danny Hinton, 20 Osvaldo El Ah, 23 Michael McCrory, 35 Tim O'Connell
Coach: Tony Rasmussen

Referee: Srebre Deovski
Assistant Referees: Ken Sharp and Leo Romero
Fourth Official: Keith Anderson

Central Coast Coasties 2 St George Saints 1

By Paul Goodwin

Fresh from their heavy 5-1 loss at the hands of leaders A.P.I.A., the Coasties were determined to put that game behind them when they faced the sometimes struggling St George at Plum Park on Saturday night.

A very ordinary first half by the home side, which saw St George dominate and take a deserved 1-0 half time lead, gave way to a second half in which Singapore-bound utility player, Sean Matthews, in his final appearance in Coasties colours, paved the way for an eventual 2-1 win by netting a much needed equaliser soon after the break.

Matthews, who will turn out for Sengkang Marine in the S League this year and leaves on Saturday with his wife, stormed through to score from 20 yards with a low shot.

St George were everywhere in the first

half, though, with Bruno Beddoni running riot and causing all sorts of problems.

He appeared to be brought down in the penalty area, but referee Greg Leverton waved "play on".

Two minutes after that let-off Beddoni got in behind the Coasties defence and headed an Angelo Petratos cross into the net for the opening goal. This was the 23rd minute and there was much more to come.

St George continued to press and except for a shot by Coasties' David Brewer into the side-netting and an Aron Binskin header that was brilliantly saved by Con Anastasiadis, the visitors had the remainder of the first half.

Obviously harsh words were said in the Coasties' dressing room at half time because an immediate change came over the game.

Gone was the tentative tackling and non commitment and a new look Coasties team took over.

Fifteen minutes into the second half skip-

per Sean Matthews retrieved the position with a low shot from 20 yards into the right hand corner of the net.

The Coasties smelt victory and it was their turn to put on the pressure.

Coach John McLafferty brought on Peter Haynes, Tom Quilty and Peter Preston, all attacking players and St George were immediately under siege.

But it took until the seventy fifth minute before they could take the lead.

James Monie sent a great through ball to Josh Maguire and from twenty yards out he brilliantly lobbed Anastasiadis, for what turned out to be the winning goal.

Coasties' goalie, Ben Xerri, had to make a couple of good saves late in the game, but there was no way the Coasties were going to let victory slip through their fingers.

McLafferty was a pleased, but relieved man after the game.

"The first half we were very poor" said the honest coach, "but we spoke about it at half time and we improved in the second half."

"Even though St. George were low down in the table, we knew we were in for a fight, but like last week we were slow off the mark."

"It was more important to get the win and stay in touch than worry about how we played. Three points is three points and our next problem is a week away," concluded McLafferty.



Singapore bound Sean Matthews said farewell with a timely goal.

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES 2
(S Matthews 60', J Maguire 75')
ST GEORGE SAINTS1
(B Beddoni 23')
at Plum Park, Lisarow

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES: 20 Ben Xeri, 3 David Brewer, 19 Sean Matthews (C), 4 Mitchell Cook, 6 Aron Binskin (9 Peter Haynes), 14 Chris Fleming, 10 Marc Falzon (7 Peter Preston), 18 Nathan Byrn (11 Tom Quilty), 17 Pat Bradley, 13 James Monie, 2 Josh Maguire
Subs not used: 1 Andrew Goldman (RGK)
Coach: John McLafferty

ST GEORGE: 1 Con Anastasiadis, 18 Luke McDougall, 4 Evangelos Petratos, 8 Jose Mendez (20 Justin Ashley), 5 Max Severe, 12 Simon Verrender, 7 George Maglis, 17 Ali Chahine, 9 Jason Lai (15 Zeki Adioski), 10 Bruno Beddoni (8 Orhan Dincer), 11 Archie Markopoulos 11
Subs not used: 13 Michael Xuerob (RGK)
Coach: Manny Spanoudakis
Referee: Greg Leverton
Assistant Referees: Mark Richardson and Darren Sprod
Fourth Official: Warren Jacobs
Yellow Cards: Central Coast David Brewer, Chris Fleming, St George, Jose Mendes, Simon Verrender Bruno Beddoni, Zeki Adioski

Rockdale City Suns 1 A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers 1

By Greg Stock

Chaotic scenes after the final whistle at John Crehan Park on Saturday night, with referee Wayne Crabb the main attraction after an action packed game was left deadlocked at one goal apiece.

It wasn't the quality of the football that was the talking point, but rather an indifferent refereeing performance, which saw Crabb give A.P.I.A., a controversial late penalty after it looked certain they were heading for their first defeat of the season. Emotion charged home fans vented their frustrations on the way through the exit gates, angry that their side had let a golden chance to knock off the league leaders, slip through their grasp.

The incident which sent the fans into a spin seemed rather tame in comparison to some others that Crabb had allowed to go through the night and given the closeness of

the match it was a brave decision in front of a packed gallery of home fans. Suns defender Richard Plesa flattening A.P.I.A. midfielder Sam Larocca in an off the ball incident, which to the naked eye didn't seem too much, but the referee saw enough there to point to the spot and allow Damon Langan the opportunity to put away the penalty.

Sadly the incident and the post match dramas overshadowed a free flowing match, which was a great advertisement for the attacking prowess of either side. Right from the opening whistle both sides went at each other at one hundred miles an hour with end to end football the name of the game.

A.P.I.A., with Zlatko Arambasic as the focal point, looked sharp and really should have been three or four nil up at the break, missing a number of golden chances they really should have taken.

The main offenders were two of Leichhardt's more experienced players in Ante Moric and Steve Karavatakis, who

each missed one on ones with only goalkeeper Peter Trajceviski to beat.

As a result Rockdale hung in there and stuck to their guns, doing enough in attack to keep their fans on the edge of their seat. Seven minutes from time, Denis Alilovic lobbed a quickly taken free kick in behind the A.P.I.A. defence. David Brickell

pounced, taking his first time shot with all the skill and poise of a veteran, beating goalkeeper Bob Catlin with a teasing lob shot.

The goal seemed to fire up Leichhardt who kept the Suns on the backfoot for the final frantic five minutes, culminating with Langans penalty.



David Brickell scored his first goal for the Suns this year.

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS1
(D Brickell 83')
A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT1
(D Langan 89 pen)
at John Crehan Park, Cringila

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS: 1. Peter Trajceviski, 3. Ghenadie Costuc (2 Eddie Wong 72'), 4. Richard Plesa, 7. Peter Apoleviski, 8. Ben Deighan (6 David Brickell 48'), 9. Spase Najdoski, 10. Denis Alilovic, 13. Robert Todorovski, 15. Malcolm Bideau, 17. Tony Clark, 18. Steve Dimitrievsk
Coaches: Miro Todorovski and Bil Petrovsk

A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS: 1. Bob Catlin, 3. Joe Moric, 5. Marcus Stergiopoulos, 6. Michael Galluzzo (18 Tony Tesoro 90'), 7. Sam Larocca, 8. James Stubbs-Mills, 15. Damon Langan 76', 9. Zlatko Arambasic, 10. Steve Karavatakis, 17. Paul Dee, 18. Ante Moric, 19. Andrew Clark
Coach: Les De Celis
Yellow Cards: Rockdale Plesa 15, Todorovski 27, Bideau 57, A.P.I.A. Clark 5
Referee: Wayne Crabb
Assistant Referees: Mario Pinella and Paul Fleming
Fourth Official: Jim Barnes

SOCCER NSW

Bankstown City Lions 3 Fairfield Bulls 2

By Paul Goodwin

This was the first home game for new Bankstown City Lions' coach George Fernandez and his men, down on numbers following the departure of a number of high profile players during the week.

For Fairfield Bulls, also anchored at the bottom of the ladder, it was a chance to get their season back on track with Sam Isaac in charge of the side for the first time in this match.

Bankstown lined up without Norman Tome, Colin Luff, Ralph Bove, Rod Madigan and Todd McManus, most of whom have been released and they brought in latest signing Alex Asanovic and welcomed back Paul Wearne, also adding the now almost fit Elias Augernios to their starting eleven.

The Bulls were without Marc Hoenselaars, Adam Peatey and keeper Darren Moore, along with Glenn Sprod who has been released and those key players were sorely missed as the game drew to its remarkable conclusion.

Being the only game in town for the day it attracted a decent crowd as there was plenty of interest in the outcome and both sides are known as good attacking teams.

But the drama that unfolded, more akin to

comedy for spectators and tragedy for the visitors, provided value for money, an unexpected twist in the tale and lots of excitement, especially towards the end.

Bankstown emerged 3-2 winners, thanks to three goals in seven minutes, right near the end, but the scoreline hides a very much different picture of how the game was played out.

Fairfield scored first in the 32nd minute and added to their lead 14 minutes into the second half, following a bizarre turn of events involving Lions' keeper Zlatko Josevski.

Matthew Borg and Luke Tomich also missed some sitters at various stages of the game.

The Bulls appeared to be coasting to a very sound win and should have stretched the lead several times, but Josevski made amends for his earlier blunder by making some fine saves in the last twenty minutes.

Then the Lions' saviour appeared on the pitch, greeted by cries of mirth from the crowd and frustration by the Fairfield players.

A stray dog had proven elusive, after running onto the pitch and it was several minutes before play could resume with a Bankstown corner.

The game had only ten minutes to go and Bankstown, for all their forward forays, had not looked like scoring up to that point in the game.

The corner from the left, dispatched by Uruguayan Fernando de Los Santos, was nodded back at the far post, by Robbie Gomez, to the 12 yard mark, where an acrobatic shot by new recruit Alex Asanovic found the net to make it 2-1.

Taking heart from this goal and the obvious break in concentration in the Fairfield team, Bankstown threw caution to the wind.

They broke quickly in the 83rd minute and when Asanovic's lob bounced off the crossbar, with the keeper beaten, there was Alex Trpovski to sweep the loose ball into an inviting net.

Finally, the winner.

Asanovic again burst through to face the keeper, Ah Akbal and despite a great save by the stand-in Bulls' man Robbie Gomez was able to follow up and smash the ball into the roof of the net to wild scenes of jubilation. The dog appeared unconcerned.

In the end it proved a sensational win for The

Lions, for whom Santos was outstanding and keeper Josevski as mercurial as ever.

Fairfield had scored their almost forgotten first goal when a ball cleared out of the Bankstown defence reached Sargoon Gewargis who took his opportunity well.

They netted their second when they stole possession after a throw taken by Josevski had left the goal unattended and former

Lions' man Robert Angievski had the simplest of tasks of finding the net.

At the time it looked as if that strange incident would lead to a clear cut Bankstown defeat. But all that changed with the pitch invasion, an even stranger occurrence.

Every dog has his day. For Bankstown and Fairfield it was this one.



George Issa (left) falls whilst contesting with Fairfield's Ismael Arrate (right).

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS

(A Asanovic 80', A Trpovski 83', R Gomez 87')

FAIRFIELD BULLS

(S Gewargis 31', R Angievski 61')
at Jensen Park, Sefton

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: 1 Zlatko Josevski, 3 Elias Augernios (14 Paul Wearne 46), 4 Bryan Raeburn, 5 Richard Lukic (C) 2 Damien Lukic, 6 Chris Bradley (10 Alex Trpovski 71), 8 Glen Moore, 15 Fernando de los Santos, 13 George Issa (12 Robert Issa 57), 9 Robert Gomez, 7 Alex Asanovic

Sub not used: 20 Bradley Swancott (RGK) *Coach:* George Fernandez

FAIRFIELD BULLS 1 Ali Akbal, 14 Ismael Arrate, 12 Ben Green, 13 Mitch Daley, 14 Sefer Yildiz (6 Arthur Diles 87), 2 Adam Snyder, 20 Luke Tomich 64, 4 Jason Connoy, 8 Stewart Van Bantam 11 Robert Angievski 16 Sargoon Gewargis (18 Simon Hutchings 46), 10 Matthew Borg *Subs not used:* Dania Conway (RGK) *Coach:* Sam Isaac

Referee: Craig Pearce

Assistant Referees: Jim Nikolau and Wayne Spagnol

Fourth Official: Michael Johnson

Yellow Cards: Bankstown City Robbie Gomez 53 Fairfield Bulls Adam Snyder 52

Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic vs Belconnen Blue Devils fixture postponed

The Canterbury Marrickville Olympic versus Belconnen Blue Devils fixture was postponed at the last minute due to the horrific bushfire situation currently gripping Canberra.

The Belconnen players had actually arrived at Henson Park to play the Berries, but when news from family and friends filtered through to the team, an executive decision was made by the Belconnen management for both squads to get back onto the team bus and return to Canberra to battle the blazes.

Belconnen goalkeeper, Tony Gianasca, sped

back from Sydney only to find that he was unable to get to his house due to the evacuation conditions.

It was not until Sunday afternoon that Tony could view his property. Fortunately his house was spared, but four houses in his street were lost.

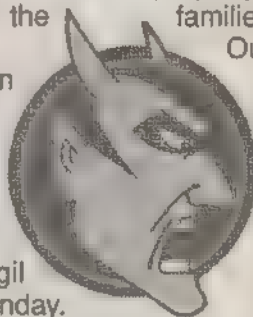
All Belconnen players and officials in threatened areas were on vigil throughout Saturday night and Sunday.

Thankfully no Blue Devils players houses or

property was lost but many of their friends and families did.

Our thoughts are with the people of Canberra during this state of emergency and we hope that there is no further loss of life or property.

Adam Mark
Corporate Communications,
Media & Marketing Manager
SOCCER NSW



FROM THE SIDELINES By Greg Stock

*Just beating 'From the Sidelines' at deadline time last Monday afternoon was the news that Fairfield Bulls coach Craig Sharpley had tendered his resignation following on from his sides 2-1 loss to Canterbury-Marrickville.

"The decision is in the best interests of all concerned," said Sharpley after meeting with the Bulls football committee.

"The coaching game is all about results and after our performances this season, I felt that a change was only fair to all concerned. I cannot fault the boys for their effort but when you don't win games, something has to give and that something is my position."

Sharpley immediately left for holidays on the N.S.W. north coast where he will be considering his next move, which could include a return to the playing ranks in the Winter Super

League. Replacing him will be Sam Isaac with a decision on a long-term replacement expected soon. On the playing roster, midfielder Glenn Sprod has been released owing to his job with the NSW Fire Brigade.

*A mini-crisis of sorts at Jensen Park with a number of senior Bankstown City players, being released in the wake of the departure of former coach Lee Sterrey. Raphael Bove, Norman Tome, Todd McManus, and Colin Luff are all on their way out, with Luff's transfer to Blacktown City completed in time for him to debut last Saturday night in the Demons 2-0 loss to Parramatta Eagles.

It is an unfortunate situation given the talent that was assembled with caretaker coach George Fernandez facing the unenviable job of trying to galvanize a new team. Luff replaced Naoki Iwaya

in the Blacktown starting eleven after Iwaya failed a late fitness test and was ruled out. On the subject of his change of clubs, the 26-year-old expressed his sadness at leaving the Lions but is looking forward to the challenge with the Demons.

"I felt Bankstown was lacking a little ambition" said Colin Luff, "so for me it was a lifestyle decision to move to a stable club where I can play with a little less pressure. I am confident I can do well, score some goals and help the Demons make the top five."

*Off the park, the Lions have a new President in Jim Zdravkovski and secretary Louie Vrtkovski.

*On the subject of transfers, acting Central Coast captain Sean Matthews jets out to Singapore this week, to join

club side Seng Kang Marine for their preseason training. The lanky defender celebrated the news by scoring the equalizer for his side in Saturday night's match against St George, and generally having a very strong match.

*Penrith have signed ex AC United striker Chris Holbrook, who is expected to make his debut for the club in the Under 19s this week.

*As reported last week St. George defender Sebastian Sinozic has played his last game for the club, jetting out for trials with MLS sides, New York/New Jersey Metrostars and Los Angeles Galaxy last Saturday morning. As one of the senior players for the Saints team, coach Manny Spanoudakis faces a very tough ask to fill the gap of a player that gave so much to his side in such a short

space of time.

"Despite only playing for half the season, Sebastian was fantastic for the club," said Spanoudakis.

"He was the consummate professional both on and off the park, helping out the younger boys as an excellent role model." The club would like to wish him all the best for his trials and hope that he can become one of only a handful of Australian players to play top-flight football in the United States.

*Sutherland will be without forward Kris Karanasos this season after the youngster tore his cruciate ligament in a freak accident. Whilst enjoying a quiet run with his mates, Karanasos twisted his knee in a pothole, the result of which is a full reconstruction.



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ROUND 8 RESULTS

FIRST GRADE

Bonnyrigg White Eagles2 (A Burgess 11/65')	Central Coast Coasties2 (S Matthews 60', J Maguire 75')	Blacktown City Demons0
Penrith Panthers1 (D Hinton 51')	St George Saints1 (B Beddomi 23')	Parramatta Eagles2 (M Meilak 19', N Riviera 23')
Rockdale City Suns1 (D Brickell 83')	Bankstown City Lions3 (A Asanovic 80', A Trpovska 83', R Gomez 87')	Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic vs Belconnen Blue Devils (POSTPONED)
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers1 (D Langan 95' Penalty)	Fairfield Bulls2 (S Gwardis 31' R Angievski 61')	

UNDER 19

Bonnyrigg White Eagles1 (T Macrae 35')	Central Coast Coasties2 (D Cooper 31', S Bonkowski 85')	Blacktown City Demons1 (L Newton 81')
Penrith Panthers1 (R Iaconis 44')	St George Saints1 (G Lagoudakis 33')	Parramatta Eagles1 (M Kassis 4')
Rockdale City Suns2 (G Nastevski 76', G O Connor 80')	Bankstown City Lions0	Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic vs Belconnen Blue Devils (POSTPONED)
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers1 (C Musumeci 51')	Fairfield Bulls2 (Y Assak 66', L Berhis 70')	

FIRST GRADE

UNDER 19

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	8	5	3	0	18	7	18	Blacktown City Demons	8	6	2	0	30	7	20
Central Coast Coasties	8	5	2	1	13	9	17	Rockdale City Suns	8	6	1	1	18	10	19
Parramatta Eagles	8	3	4	1	10	4	13	Parramatta Eagles	8	5	3	0	18	7	18
Rockdale City Suns	8	3	3	2	15	13	12	Penrith Panthers	8	4	2	2	14	8	14
C/bury M/ville Olympic	7	3	3	1	9	7	12	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	8	4	1	3	15	12	13
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	8	3	2	3	11	11	11	C/bury M/ville Olympic	7	3	1	3	18	13	10
Blacktown City Demons	8	3	2	3	10	11	11	Belconnen Blue Devils	7	2	3	2	9	10	9
Penrith Panthers	8	2	3	3	11	10	9	Bonnyrigg White Eagles	8	2	2	4	8	13	8
Belconnen Blue Devils	7	1	4	2	9	10	7	Central Coast Coasties	8	1	4	3	7	16	7
Bankstown City Lions	8	2	1	5	8	15	7	St George Saints	8	1	1	6	5	16	4
St George Saints	8	2	0	6	7	15	6	Fairfield Bulls	8	1	1	6	7	22	4
Fairfield Bulls	8	1	1	6	10	19	4	Bankstown City Lions	8	0	3	5	6	21	3

NEXT ROUND

ROUND 9 FIRST GRADE

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Belconnen Blue Devils	v Bankstown City Lions	Sat 25 Jan	7.00pm	McKellar Soccer Centre
Blacktown City Demons	v Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Sat 25 Jan	7.00pm	Gabbie Stadium
Fairfield Bulls	v Penrith Panthers	Sun 26 Jan	6.00pm	Nineveh Field
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	v C/bury-M/ville Olympic	Sun 26 Jan	6.00pm	Lambert Park
St George Saints	v Rockdale City Suns	Sun 26 Jan	6.00pm	St George Stadium
Parramatta Eagles	v Central Coast Coasties	Sun 26 Jan	6.00pm	Melita Stadium

UNDER 19

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Belconnen Blue Devils	v Bankstown City Lions	Sat 25 Jan	4.30pm	McKellar Soccer Centre
Blacktown City Demons	v Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Sat 25 Jan	5.00pm	Gabbie Stadium
Fairfield Bulls	v Penrith Panthers	Sun 26 Jan	4.00pm	Nineveh Field
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	v C/bury-M/ville Olympic	Sun 26 Jan	4.00pm	Lambert Park
St George Saints	v Rockdale City Suns	Sun 26 Jan	4.00pm	St George Stadium
Parramatta Eagles	v Central Coast Coasties	Sun 26 Jan	4.00pm	Melita Stadium

TOP GOALSCORERS

7 —	Zlatko Arambasic (A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers)
5 —	Spase Najdoski (Rockdale City Suns)
4 —	Marko Perinovic (Belconnen Blue Devils), Aaron Burgess (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Luke Roodenberg (Blacktown City), James Monie (Central Coast)
3 —	Robert Todorovski (Rockdale City Suns), Rod Hutchinson (Penrith Panthers), Ante Moric (A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers), Steve Karavatakis (A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers), Matthew Borg (Fairfield Bulls), Nathan Rivera (Parramatta Eagles), Danny Hinton (Penrith Panthers), Josh Maguire (Central Coast)
2 —	Paul Bourke (Canterbury-Marrickville), Shane Knight (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Allan Picken (Canterbury-Marrickville), Colin Luff (Bankstown City), Marc Hoenselaars (Fairfield Bulls), Simon Catanzaro (Blacktown City), Clinton Larfield (Belconnen Blue Devils), Ben Deighan (Rockdale City Suns), Ben Delicata (Parramatta Eagles), Andy Amegashue (Canterbury), Daniel McCann (Penrith Panthers), Bruno Beddomi (St George), Sean Matthews (Central Coast), Robert Angievski (Fairfield Bulls)

For all the latest news, results and information check out www.nswpremierleague.com

SOCCER NSW

ROUND 9 PREVIEW



Belconnen Blue Devils VS Bankstown City Lions



Saturday 25th January, 2003 - 7.00pm
MCKELLAR SOCCER CENTRE, MCKELLAR

The nations capital is in turmoil this week after the recent bush-fire emergency, and it will be interesting to see how the Blue Devils come up for their game with Bankstown City.

Graciously their match against Canterbury was called off at the last minute allowing their players and officials the opportunity to head home and defend their homes.

Back to the business of football and coach Lino Fiorese faces an agonizing week to decide his squad for the game given the lengthy injury list.

Fiorese has ten first grade players all struggling with various injuries and it will be left right until the last to

make a final decision.

The Ivo De Jesus saga continues to dog the club with the enigmatic striker saying he will continue with the club but not in the first grade squad. Given the profile of De Jesus it is a very bizarre situation to say the least.

Bankstown's season is in danger of collapse after an exodus of four senior players has left them with a very bare squad. Colin Luff has definitely gone, while Ralph Bove, Norman Tome, Todd McManus, and Brad Swancott are all rumored to have asked for clearances.

Elias Augerinos made an auspicious return to the playing ranks after a knee problem playing the first half

in their loss to the Bulls, while new signing Aleksander Asanovic also did well in a losing team. Both players expected to push for a starting spot this week with George Fernandez looking to get his side back on an even keel after weeks of disruptions.

The Blue Devils have won just one of their four starts at McKellar and if they are to make ground on the top five teams they will really need to start by beating the Lions this week.

Given the form of ace marksman Marko Pernovic and their home ground advantage it's difficult to suggest anything but a home side victory.



Blacktown City Demons VS Bonnyrigg White Eagles



Saturday 25th January, 2003 - 7.00pm
GARRIE STADIUM, BLACKTOWN

Yes! This is the big one in a season of big ones.

The most evenly poised and well balanced competition has seen these two traditional giants slipping a little behind the main pack of contenders for the first half dozen rounds or so, but all the signs are that when the whips are cracking, as the semi finals approach, both look like figuring as usual.

Blacktown has been less than convincing in some of its home outings, yet much of this may be due to the loss of key defenders and the overall ability of the side should not be in question.

For Bonnyrigg White Eagles the

chance to lock talons with the Demons is always something that adds spice to a game in this league.

Naoki Imai who got a knock in training mid week and had to miss the Parramatta game should be back and Paul Yates, who came on off the bench in that unexpected loss last week, ought to be ready to resume.

Wholesale changes seem imminent for the Demons with coach Brian Brown hinting that many players are overdue for a rest.

Having lost two in a row against fellow title contenders the home side can ill afford to drop points here as well. The better sides will start to get too far away and making up the

ground in a 12 team competition is not easy.

Bonnyrigg always enjoys great games with Blacktown and they are on a bit of a streak at the moment. They needed some luck to overhaul Penrith at the Serbian Centre and will not find this easy.

Away games have been hard fought for Bonnyrigg. Narrow losses or fighting draws have been their hallmark and certainly they won't need much motivation here.

Demons' striker Colin Luff will be aiming to use this match against his former club to re-launch his season with his new club and get among the goals once more.



Fairfield Bulls VS Penrith Panthers



Sunday 26th January, 2003 - 6.00pm
NINEVEN FIELD, EDENSOR PARK

As they say in the classics, "Things can only get better", and this chorus might be heard echoing around Fairfield's St John's Park training sessions this week.

Having squandered a two goal lead against fellow cellar dwellers the Bankstown City Lions in round 8, questions regarding commitment are certainly being asked of certain players in the Bulls outfit. Replacement coach Sam Isaac has a difficult job ahead of him since the departure of Craig Sharpley last week.

The Former Marconi youth

league coach will need to bring out every trick in the book to inspire a team, who on paper should be performing better than their position reflects. The loss of former NSL player Glenn Spod will be a disappointment to the club that desperately needs someone to inspire them to shake off the shackles of 12th position.

The Penrith Panthers were a little unlucky to leave the Serbian Centre without a point last weekend. After getting out of the blocks quickly in the early rounds, the Panthers have slipped a little and need a few results to go their way

to threaten a top-five position. Since the departure of Peter Bennett, many in the Panthers squad have taken up the challenge to perform. In particular Daniel McCann, Luke O'Connell, Shane Hammond and the ever-present Jason Sciberras have proven to be the backbone of the Penrith outfit.

Being the pragmatist that I am, unfortunately the light at the end of the tunnel may be the on-coming train for Fairfield and against a cohesive unit such as the Penrith Panthers, a home victory will be unlikely.



A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers VS Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic



Sunday 26th January, 2003 - 6.00pm
LAMBERT PARK, LEICHHARDT

This derby last season proved an easy win for the Tigers but this season things could be a lot different.

The Berries are a much tighter unit this term and have some good scalps under their belt already.

Apart from a shock loss at home to Rockdale, who have since shown the form to be better than it looked at the time, Canterbury has been pretty solid. Their win at Bonnyrigg impressed many and there is little doubt that they can do as well here as well if their focus is complete.

A.P.I.A.'s Achilles heel last term was its home form but thus far things have looked far rosier. Any slip ups

are likely to come in derby games like this and they will be wary about this one in particular.

Having survived to get a point at Rockdale last weekend to preserve their unbeaten record by the skin of their teeth A.P.I.A. will want to go on with the job here.

Central Coast are closing on them again now and maximum points are vital for the Tigers in this game.

Canterbury had a week off due to their home game against Belconnen being called off and could suffer the affects of not being as match hardened. No doubt they will do some strong work during the week.

A.P.I.A. have looked sensational

in all of their matches but the two sides did meet in pre season where the Berries came out on top. Last season the Berries were buried under an avalanche of goals.

This term Apia will be looking to do the same. It seems unlikely that this Canterbury side will lie down so the match could well be another epic for Lambert Park devotees.

Many are flocking to the charming Leichhardt arena once more for an evening of top Sunday football and if they choose this one for their entertainment this week they are sure to be rewarded with some good skills, fighting derby teams bent on a finals spot and giving it their all.



St George Saints VS Rockdale City Suns



Sunday 26th January, 2003 - 6.00pm
ST GEORGE STADIUM, ROCKDALE

There hasn't been a local derby like this for years, since 1996 to be exact and with the game being played just across the road from Rockdale's spiritual home ground, a bumper crowd is expected to be in attendance.

The Saints did everything but take a point from their road trip to the Central Coast last week, netting early via 'goal a game' Bruno Beddoni but failing to hold out the fast finishing home side.

Beddoni seems to be over the worst of a groin injury and should start alongside either Jason Lal or Orhan Dincer in a two pronged forward line with Angelo Petratos likely

to be shifted into defence to cover for the recently departed Sebastian Sinozic.

Their latest signing, former Socceroo Abbas Sand should be named on the bench giving the side some extra sting in the last twenty minutes.

Suns fans will be talking about the 1-1 draw with A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt last Saturday night for weeks, going oh so close to knocking off the league leaders.

Their big plus at present is the form of their defence where Richard Pleša, Malcolm Bideau and Gbenade Costiac are really starting to gel, while the move to drop Rob

Todorovski in behind Spase Najdoski on the forward line looks to give them more potency.

Ben Deighan, Tony Ju and Denis Ahlovic are expected to be rested from training this week in a bid to freshen them from knocks ahead of a start this week with Eddie Wong expected to be considered for a mid-field position after coming off the bench last weekend.

The Suns have not won against the Saints at St George Stadium for ten years, but given the occasion and an expectant army of their loyal fans to make plenty of noise, that record should be broken.



Parramatta Eagles VS Central Coast Coasties



Sunday 26th January, 2003 - 6.00pm
MELITA STADIUM, SOUTH GRANVILLE

By virtue of a 2-0 win over Blacktown City last Saturday night, the Eagles have rocketed into third position on the table and look set to mount a series challenge for a top two spot.

They haven't been beaten since their round three loss to the Bulls and with some solid form against the likes of the Demons, Tigers and Blue Devils, are expected to start this week as favorites.

"The Coasties are playing some excellent football at present and thoroughly deserve their position in second spot" said Eagles coach John Calleja.

"It doesn't matter who the opposi-

tion is or how the game pans out, they continue to keep coming and they are not a side we can afford to take lightly. I'm confident our side can match it with them and we'll be looking for all three points."

The Coasties continued their high flying form fighting back from a goal down to defeat a plucky Saints side 2-1.

Their acting skipper Sean Matthews played his last match and has flown out to Singapore with coach John McLafferty facing a selection dilemma for his position.

Midfielder Peter Preston or Tom Quilty is expected to be the forerunners, Preston fighting his way back

into the team after a recent knee problem.

All eyes will be on playmaker Josh Maguire who is largely responsible for driving the Coasties forward. If he can find some space, and create some opportunities, the visitors are in with a better than even chance of causing an upset.

In their seven previous meetings at Melita Stadium, the Coasties have won just once, way back in 1996.

With the Eagles in such good form it's terribly hard to see that changing, but I'll suck my neck out and say a draw given the close nature of the two teams.



SOCCER NSW



1ST ANNUAL UNDER 17 SYDNEY TOURNAMENT 11-19 JANUARY 2003

The NSW Institute of Sport were crowned the inaugural winners of the Sydney Tournament for Under 17's on Saturday evening after defeating Hajduk Wanderers 4-3 in an exciting Cup Final at Valentine Sports Park.

In a strange twist of fate, Parramatta City claimed the Plate title after not gaining a point in the first three pool games, but winning their semi-final and final, 1-0 and 3-2 respectively.

The finals day began in oppressive 40 degree heat as a heatwave gripped the Sydney basin. Prior to the day's fixtures taking place the referee's and tournament Director, Mr John Hedison, organised for drink breaks to be taken every 10 minutes in a bid to prevent dehydration and heat stroke amongst the players and referee's.

The first fixture of the day was a battle of the Associations with Nepean and St George facing up in the Plate play-off for 3rd and 4th. Earlier in the tournament, these two teams played out a 1-1 draw, and with Association pride on the line, this was more than a play-off. As could be expected, both sides began the match at a slow pace due to the extreme heat and letting the ball do most of the work.

A couple of early chances saw both teams hit the woodwork and both keepers required to prevent certain goals, but it was not until late in the second half that Hussein Chouair scored the solitary goal of the match that gave St George bragging rights until the next time these two associations meet.

In the Plate Final, Parramatta City were up against the Bonnyrigg White Eagles. Bonnyrigg had already between Parramatta 1-0 on day one of the tournament, but this match was by no means a fait accompli. With the heat still in the extreme range, both sides knew that to win this on it was important to wait for the right opportunity rather than waste valuable energy.

The game had barely started when Parramatta's Jason Beer, sucker punched Bonnyrigg with a well taken goal in the second minute.

Before Bonnyrigg had the opportunity to mount a challenge, Parramatta struck again in the 10th minute via Sue Hun Kim and nine minutes later courtesy of Foti Hatzivalamis.

Reeling after conceding three goals in the space of twenty minutes, Bonnyrigg rallied back and pegged the deficit back to one goal through goals to Milija Perendic and Gorgi Kvackovski.

Unfortunately for the White Eagles, the equaliser that would at least have sent the game to the golden goal was not forthcoming and Parramatta City held on to take the plate.

The play-off for the Cup 3rd/4th position was played out between Westfield Sports High and the Macleay Valley Rangers.

Like all fixtures on Finals day, these two teams had also met previously in their group B pool match which saw an exciting 2-2 draw on Matchday 1.

But on this occasion, it was Westfield's day when they dominated the match from the first whistle leading 1-0 at half time courtesy of a Tae Jun Seo goal. The lead was extended in the second half with goals from Devon Bonne and Joseph Duffell.

The final score of 3-0 a justified result for a quality team, but Macleay Valley impressed manner with their raw energy and determination and will



Will Tom scored two in the final for NSWIS.

be a much improved squad for the tournament's experience.

The NSW Institute of Sport could be excused for coming into the Cup final feeling a little confident about taking out the title after defeating Hajduk 4-0 in their earlier Pool A match.

In a way that confidence could have also been their undoing. In contrast to the previous play-off fixtures, the pace of this final was fast and furious with both teams eager to claim the first Sydney Cup title.

Hajduk began the final by applying the pressure

early. With 3 corners in quick succession, put the NSWIS boys against the wall.

This early pressure eventually payed off for Hajduk when Elsid Barkhousir converted a one-on-one opportunity against Brendon Boney to give the Wanderers the lead.

NSWIS collected themselves from the kick-off and replied in the best way possible when Eric Paartalu equalised 2 minutes later after a cross from Chris Nunes was poorly cleared by the Wanderers defence.

But it was NSWIS who scored their second goal when Will Thom gave them the lead with a well taken goal.

Just when Kelly Cross thought his boys would go to the break with a one goal lead, Hajduk provided some spark to the match when a through ball found Michael Pierce on right who slotted calmly to bring the scores even at the turn-around.

The second half began at the same rate with both teams looking for the goal that would edge them closer to the cup. NSWIS had the better of the possession, and had it not been for some great goalkeeping from Hajduk custodian Brett Easton, they would have had a bagful.

But unfortunately for Easton the only chink in his armour occurred in the 45th minute when a corner from Tayfn Buyukcopru was crossed to the near post. Easton called for the ball, but due to a bad bounce did not quite have possession of the ball when Will Thom was Johnny-on-the-spot and toed the ball from Easton's fingertips, along the goal-line to the far post.

Hajduk again refused to lay down and continued to press forward looking for an equaliser.

In the 50th minute a free kick to NSWIS just outside the 18 yard box on the left hand side of the pitch was placed by Eric Paartalu, the 16-year old captain of the current Joeys squad.

Easton had set a solid 4 man wall and positioned himself wisely at the far post. From the positioning of his team-mates, it was obvious that Paartalu was going to shoot for goal.

And shoot he did, curling a neat right footed lob over the wall to the near post. Easton spotted this early and produced a miraculous save to deny the NSWIS midfielder an extension of the lead.

Then in a case of deja vu seven minutes later NSWIS were awarded another free kick in exactly the same position. Paartalu again stepped up for the

honours and Easton set his wall and positioned himself again at the far post accordingly.

The crowd was left wondering for a moment whether Paartalu was going to chance the curling lob again, or whether he had other plans. But before the spectators and goal keeper had too long to contemplate the situation, Paartalu struck a deft shot to the far post that swerved and dipped past the hapless Easton who was only able to get a small amount of glove on the ball before it crossed the line.

Many considered the Institute's lead unassailable, all except Hajduk who still refused to throw in the towel. Again they pressed forward, looking for the a goal that would help bridge the deficit. For all their hard work, the Wanderers were rewarded in the 66th minute when a well struck Adam Gatt shot flew through the hands of Brendon Boney to bring the score back to 4-3.

In the remaining 4 minutes Hajduk threw everything at NSWIS, but the Institute boys showed maturity beyond their years to absorb the pressure, and claim the inaugural Sydney Cup for under 17's.

On hand to award the Sydney Cup to the NSW Institute of Sport was former Australian Youth International and Soccerroo, Luke Casserley, as well as Soccer NSW Coaching & Development Manager, Jean Paul de Marigny.

After the match NSWIS coach Kelly Cross, was extremely satisfied with the efforts of his team.

"When you consider that the majority of boys in the squad are 14 or 15 years of age, it's great to see them compete with teams 2 years their senior," said Cross.

"This tournament was a ideal preparation for our squad who will later this year tour Europe playing against Clubs such as, Feyenoord, PSV Eindhoven, Bayer Leverkusen and Borussia Dortmund. Although we have alot of attacking flair, we are still a little naive defensively which we need to work on before touring."

"In my ten years of involvement coaching at this level, this is one of the most talented squad I have been associated with," concluded Cross.

Congratulations must also go to the tournament director, Mr John Hedison, and his band of volunteers and parents who made the 1st Sydney Tournament for Under 17's a success.

With already interest in next year's tournament from Asia and Oceania, this event will surely put Soccer NSW on the world footballing map.

MATCH DAY 1

Saturday 11th January

NSWIS	6	ST GEORGE	3
PARRAMATTA CITY	0	BONNYRIGG	1
NEPEAN	1	HAJDUK	4
WSHS	2	MACLEAY VALLEY RANGERS	2

MATCH DAY 2

Sunday 12th January

MACLEAY VALLEY RANGERS	4	BONNYRIGG	1
ST GEORGE	0	HAJDUK	1
NSWIS	6	NEPEAN	0
WSHS	4	PARRAMATTA CITY	1

MATCH DAY 3

Tuesday 14th January

ST GEORGE	1	NEPEAN	1
NSWIS	4	HAJDUK	0
MACLEAY VALLEY RANGERS	3	PARRAMATTA CITY	1
WSHS	1	BONNYRIGG	0

TABLES

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
NSW INSTITUTE OF SPORT	3	3	0	0	16	3	9
HAJDUK WANDERERS	3	2	0	1	5	5	6
ST GEORGE	3	0	1	2	4	8	1
NEPEAN ASSOCIATION	3	0	1	2	2	11	1

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
MACLEAY VALLEY RANGERS	3	2	1	0	9	4	7
WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES	3	1	0	2	2	5	3
PARRAMATTA CITY	3	0	0	3	2	8	0

PLATE SEMI-FINALS

Thursday 16th January

ST GEORGE	0	PARRAMATTA CITY	1
BONNYRIGG	1	NEPEAN	0

CUP SEMI-FINALS

Thursday 16th January

MACLEAY VALLEY RANGERS	1	HAJDUK	2
NSWIS	3	WSHS	1

FINALS DAY

Saturday January 18

PLATE 3rd/4th PLAY-OFF

ST GEORGE	1	NEPEAN	2
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PLATE FINAL

PARRAMATTA CITY	3	BONNYRIGG	2
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CUP 3rd/4th PLAY-OFF

MACLEAY VALLEY RANGERS	0	WSHS	3
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CUP FINAL

HAJDUK	3	NSWIS	4
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FINALS STANDINGS

1. NSW Institute of Sport
2. Hajduk Wanderers
3. Westfield Sports High School
4. Macleay Valley Rangers
5. Parramatta City
6. Bonnyrigg White Eagles
7. Nepean Association
8. St George Soccer Association



SOCCER NSW



NSW INSTITUTE OF SPORT

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120 hours.

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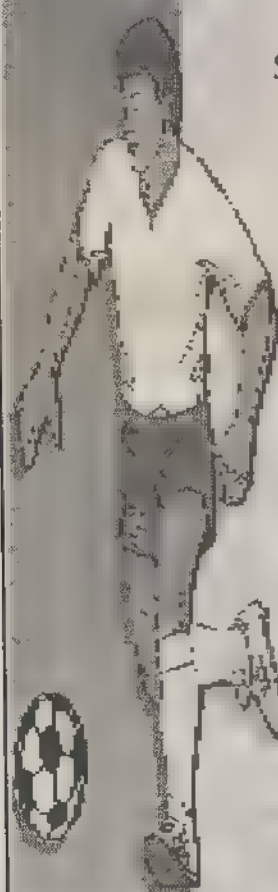
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The Soccer Wearhouse has moved to new premises at Valentine Sports Park.

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ITALIAN SERIE A

ITALIAN AFFAIR

By Joe Russo

A little Northern Italian club called Triestina could well be in the Serie A next year. Last year they were in the Third Division and this year they are leading the Serie B. It seems like another Chievo style fairytale could well be on the way.

Triestina's goalkeeper is one Angelo Pagotto and his life story has parallels to Australia's own goalkeeper Mark Bosnich. He was a few years ago where Bosnich is today, 29-year-old Pagotto was never as talented as Bosnich but did manage to play in the Serie A with Napoli, Sampdoria, Empoli, Perugia and even AC Milan in the 1996/97 season.

A few years ago, whilst at Perugia, he found himself ousted from football for two years for cocaine taking, which he claims he knew nothing about. Some thought it was the end of his career but little Triestina gave him a second chance.

Should Triestina make it to the Serie A next year then it would also be a return for Pagotto to the highest level. Pagotto, a former Italian Under 20 international, puts his return down to hard work.

Lazio's current goalkeeper and former Italian national team custodian on 25 occasions, Angelo Peruzzi, was also ousted from the game for cocaine taking for a year over a decade ago when he was playing for Roma.

Peruzzi, who turns 33 in a few days and is into his third year at Lazio, was only a youngster then and went on to make a brilliant career for himself after his suspension. He had an eight-year stint at Juventus and became Italy's number one for several years.

So whatever the final outcome is for Bosnich, there is no doubt that the talented goalkeeper could well be back playing at the highest levels.

He is arguably the best goalkeeper Australia has ever produced and, at his peak, one of the best in the world. As one of our finest representatives ever in the Green and Gold we can only wish him the best of luck. Meanwhile, bring on Triestina to the Serie A.

♦♦♦♦
Gabriel Batistuta will be an Inter Milan player until the end of the season. Roma will lend him to Inter and he will return in very handy as a replacement for his countryman Hernan Crespo.

Crespo, who has been in great form this season, seriously injured himself recently against Modena. Batistuta was seen as Crespo's rival in the 2002 World Cup for a place in the Argentine team. Ironically now Batistuta will take Crespo's place at club level.

Partnering Batistuta up front will be Sydney restaurateur Christian Vieri with Uruguay's Alvaro Recoba just in behind.

Batistuta had fallen out of favour at Roma and it was no secret that he no longer saw eye to eye with coach Fabio Capello.

Rumours of a transfer to England or even Japan surfaced, but obviously Inter represents one last chance for the great striker to prove that he still has something to offer in Italy.

Meanwhile Roma is really a club in crisis. They languish in mid table whilst their bitter city rivals, Lazio, are near the top. That for Roma fans would be the equivalent of a double blow.

Capello now finds himself in a terrible position with the supporters turning against him. It was less than two years ago that he was the toast of the city as he led Roma to only their third ever Serie A title (Scudetto).

Capello is now into his fourth year at Roma and he must wonder if he has stayed on a year too long. However, his lucrative contract, where he stands to earn 12 million Euros over the next two and a half years, expires in 2005.

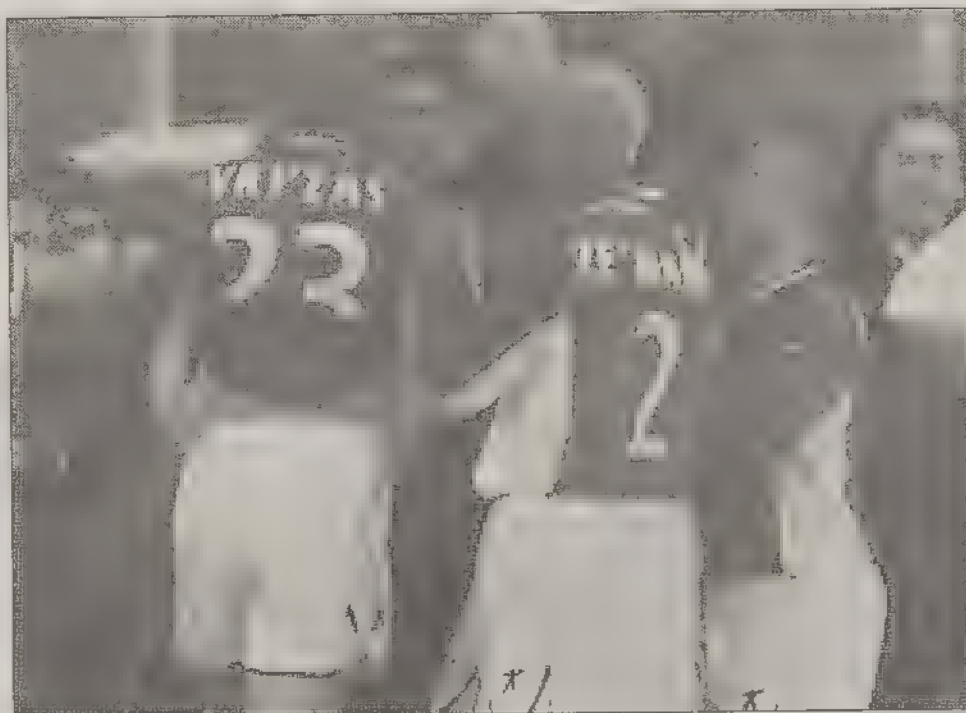
Roma would be considerably out of pocket should they decide to sack Capello who has proven himself to be one of Europe's great club coaches over the years at AC Milan, Real Madrid and Roma.

There is a lot of speculation that Capello has lost the respect of the players but none more so than striker Vincenzo Montella. Capello blames the players for the lack of success and Montella is adamant that the problem rests elsewhere.

Capello, who is supposedly up against hostile players, must also face the constant media criticism, which has questioned his choice of players, and already there is talk that the Capello era has ended.

Olivier Dacourt is an example that is cited. After transferring from Leeds Utd only two days earlier, he was rushed into the starting lineup against Chievo. Roma lost that home game one nil and many thought that Dacourt wasn't match fit.

Meanwhile the possible Capello replacements are said to be Perugia's Serse Cosmi and Chievo's Luigi Del Neri. The Del Neri rumour for next year just doesn't seem to want to go away and it will be interesting to see what happens.



Zisis Vryzas celebrates one of his two goals against Inter. Perugia won four goals to one.

AC MILAN 2 PIACENZA 1

AC Milan came from behind to beat lowly Piacenza 2-1 and open up a three-point lead at the top of Serie A on Sunday.

Sergei Gurenko had given the visitors a shock lead eight minutes into the second half.

But Piacenza's joy was short-lived as Andrea Pirlo levelled from the penalty spot within a minute and Brazilian World Cup star Rivaldo netted the winner with 21 minutes remaining.

PERUGIA 4 INTER 1

Perugia pulled off the shock of the day by toppling high-flying Inter Milan 4-1. Two goals by Zisis Vryzas and an early penalty by Marcelo Ze Maria and a Massimiliano Fusani effort gave the home side a 4-0 lead.

Things got even worse for the visitors when Luigi Di Biagio was sent off in the 71st minute and Christian Vieri's penalty goal seven minutes later was small comfort.

ATALANTA 2 ROMA 1

Paolo Tramezzani netted an 86th-minute winner to hand Atalanta three crucial points and heap more misery on Roma.

Roma, Serie A champions in 2001, are languishing in mid-table with the pressure continuing to mount on coach Fabio Capello.

The day started well for the visitors, though, when the influential Francesco Totti opened the scoring after nine minutes.

But the game changed 11 minutes later when Roma had Brazilian midfielder Emerson sent off after pick-

ing up two yellow cards.

Atalanta, who move out of the relegation zone, took full advantage to level through Cristiano Doni before Tramezzani had the final say.

LAZIO 2 UDINESE 1

Lazio beat Udinese 2-1 to make the most of Inter's slip and move into second spot. Claudio Lopez opened the scoring for the Roman side in the 26th minute, only for Roberto Muzzi to level things for Udinese 14 minutes later for the visitors.

But Stefano Fiore struck what would prove to be the winner for Lazio on the stroke of half-time.

TORINO 0 COMO 0

The battle between Serie A's basement boys at the Stadio Delle Alpi ended in a stalemate with neither Torino or Como capable of snatching the points.

That means Como are still without a victory this season, while the home side were unable to add to their tally of two wins.

The draw was little use to either side, who are both in danger of being cut off at the bottom of the table.

MODENA 0 BRESCIA 0

Modena and Brescia also played out a goal-less draw which does neither of them any favours as both try to dig their way out of mid-table obscurity.

Neither side could find a breakthrough despite the return of key players on Sunday, with striker Giuseppe Sculli recovering from injury for Modena and the ver-

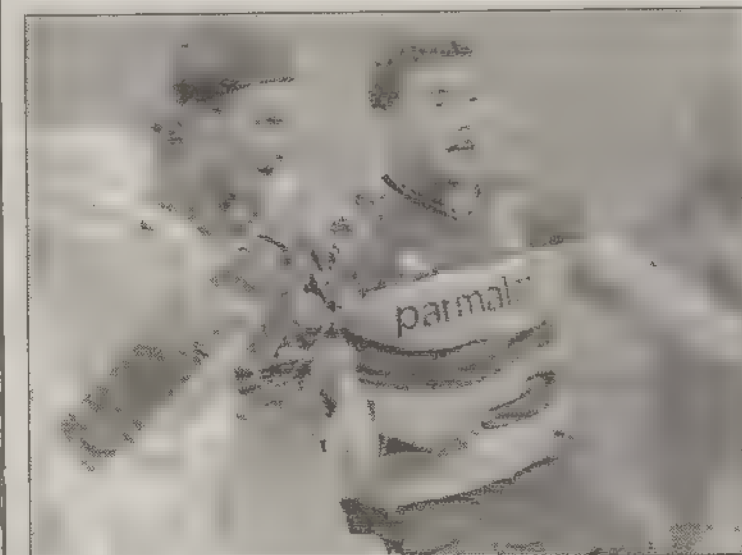
satile Stephen Appiah back in the Brescia line-up after a suspension.

Even the presence of Roberto Baggio could not inspire Brescia to find victory in this, the first encounter between the two sides in the top flight since 1947.

PARMA 2 EMPOLI 0

On Saturday Parma had put more daylight between themselves and Empoli in the Serie A table by claiming a 2-0 victory at the Stadio Ennio Tardini.

Striker Alberto Gilardino



Empoli's Stefano Lucchini (left) and Parma's Adrian Mutu vie for possession.

gave the home side the lead in the 12th minute.

And Brazilian forward Adriano, making his return to action after a lay-off due to a knee injury, extended their advantage nine minutes from the end.

REGGINA 1 BOLOGNA 0

Also on Saturday Reggina's bid to avoid the drop received a much-needed boost with a crucial 1-0 home win against Bologna.

The win, Reggina's third at home this season, came courtesy of Gianluca Savoldi's 15th-minute strike.

Reggina moved up to 15th place in the table while Bologna stay in sixth.

CHIEVO 1 JUVENTUS 4

Juventus remain four points behind Milan after David Trezeguet's hat-trick helped them to a 4-1 win at Chievo on Sunday night.

Juve were quickly into their stride, as Trezeguet (10) and an Alessandro Del Piero penalty (20) gave them a 2-0 lead.

Trezeguet got his second and Juve's third on 68 minutes, before Federico Cossato pulled one back four minutes later.

Juve were awarded another penalty four minutes from time and Trezeguet converted it to complete his hat-trick and a convincing win for the Turin giants.

FIXTURES

Saturday 26 January 2003

Modena v Atalanta

Perugia v Chievo

Inter v Empoli

Udinese v Milan

Brescia v Parma

Juventus v Piacenza

Lazio v Reggina

Como v Roma

Bologna v Torino

Parma 2 - 0 Empoli, Reggina 1 - 0 Bologna, AC Milan 2 - 1 Piacenza, Atalanta 2 - 1 AS Roma, Lazio 2 - 1 Udinese, Modena 0 - 0 Brescia, Perugia 4 - 1 Inter Milan, Torino 0 - 0 Como, Chievo 1 - 4 Juventus.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AC Milan	17	12	3	2	34	11	39
Lazio	17	10	6	1	33	16	36
Inter Milan	17	11	3	3	34	20	36
Juventus	17	10	5	2	32	13	35
Chievo	17	10	2	5	28	17	32
Bologna	17	7	6	4	19	14	27
Parma	17	7	5	5	29	19	26
Udinese	17	7	5	5	16	16	26
Roma	17	6	5	6	28	25	23
Empoli	17	6	4	7	24	24	22
Perugia	17	6	4	7	22	24	22
Modena	17	6	2	9	12	24	20
Brescia	17	4	6	7	19	26	18
Atalanta	17	3	5	9	17	29	14
Piacenza	17	3	4	10	14	26	13
Reggina	17	3	4	10	14	32	13
Torino	17	2	4	11	9	30	10
Como	17	0	7	10	9	27	7



ENGLISH



An English Odyssey

By Stuart Jones

Poor old Spurs can not take a trick in the transfer market. Robbie Fowler's decision to stay at Leeds and not go to Manchester City seems to have been a big blow in the other part of North London (sorry not Leyton Orient but Spurs).

Apparently it was set to go down that Fowler would go to City freeing up Shaun Goater to move to Bolton freeing up Michael Ricketts to go to Spurs.

To keep the wage bill down Spurs was to sell Rebrov to Fulham and let Ferdinand go to West Ham.

Now all of this has been put on hold after Robbie Fowler rethought his decision to leave Leeds even though a fee of seven million pounds had been agreed between the two clubs.

The only part looking to go ahead was the Rebrov move but that has been frozen as Rebrov feels Jean Tigana will be sacked at the end of the season. Tottenham are said to be watching developments closely.

Liverpool's slump has surprised many but none more so than Gerard Houllier who last week came out in the press and conceded there may be a mass change of playing staff at seasons end.

He was quoted as saying the tough will survive but the weak will go. Ian Rush has even joined the backroom staff at this old club to try and redress the lack of goalscoring.

Meanwhile Michael Owen has had to come out and deny a gambling debt was built up by himself in the card games played during the World Cup.

The England team were reported to be playing cards for massive money in a week in football dominated by the scourge of gambling.

Ruud van Nistelrooy has revealed that Manchester United players play cards for money on away trips around you this has happened a lot in the last twenty years it is the amount of money that is a concern.

Meanwhile Chelsea's Eidur Gudjohnsen admitting that he lost £400,000 in a London casino. Whilst clubs all over the country go bust players at the top level get richer and richer, it is a real shame that some of that wealth can not be more evenly spread so players in the lower divisions can get enough money to make ends meet.

Good news for Everton as young star Wayne Rooney has committed himself to the club with a new three year deal.

There was much speculation of a departure from Goodison Park but finally Everton are proving they no longer have to sell to survive back to the point they were in the late 1980s.

Meanwhile at Manchester City evergreen custodian Peter Schmeichel has hinted at the chance of going around again. He said that unlike his days at United there are not as many games at City and he has enjoyed going "to work" each day so he could play well past his 40th birthday.

Brian Kidd looks set to be number two in the English coaching set up by the time England play Australia at Upton Park. Others who were in the frame were David Platt and Peter Taylor.

In transfers this week Daryl Powell was released by Birmingham City to be picked up by Sheffield Wednesday.

Dean Windass has left Middlesbrough for high flying Sheffield United (who knocked over rivals Wednesday 3-1 in the latest installment of the Sheffield derby). Keith Briggs left Stockport County for Norwich City for 650,000 pounds.

Charlton have certainly caused a stir this week by asking for a replay against Chelsea this time on grass. If any one saw the TV footage of the game Stamford Bridge's pitch was covered in sand and was in a poor state indeed.

Charlton were so upset by the conditions they have made a formal complaint to the FA. Charlton claim, Chelsea were in breach of League rule 17 section one which states, 'No league match will be played on an artificial surface.'

Charlton claim they were informed that the game was played on the base on which their new pitch was directly laid on Monday and Tuesday.

Finally some good news for West Ham as Freddie Kanoute and Paolo Di Canio look like being back by the end of the month. Both strikers have suffered from injury whilst the Hammers have slipped further in to the relegation mire.

Until next week keep enjoying football the English way!

Manchester United left it until injury-time to secure what could ultimately be a valuable Premiership three points in a Saturday lunchtime 2-1 win over Chelsea.

The Blues took the lead at Old Trafford through a neat finish by Eidur Gudjohnsen on the half-hour but Paul Scholes headed home an equaliser nine minutes later after Carlo Cuccinelli's poor clearance fell to David Beckham and he centred the ball for his England team-mate.

United dominated the second half as Ole Gunnar Solskjaer hit the post with a shot on the turn and Ruud van Nistelrooy had a header tipped around the post by Cudicini.

Sir Alex Ferguson's men appeared set for a draw before South American substitutes Juan Sebastian Veron and Diego Forlan combined for the winner a minute into stoppage-time.

The Red Devils are now two points behind leaders Arsenal who are at home to relegation threatened West Ham on Sunday.

Alan Shearer scored after 10.5 seconds as Newcastle beat Middlesbrough 2-0 at St James' Park to leapfrog Chelsea into third place in the Barclays Premiership.

The former England captain collected a wayward clearance by City goalkeeper Carlo Nash to strike and make it a terrible start for Kevin Keegan's men.

Shearer's strike partner Craig Bellamy added a second in the 64th minute when he got on the end of Laurent Robert's cross to the far post from the left to seal a miserable week for City, who missed out on signing Robbie Fowler when he changed his mind at the 11th hour over a transfer from Leeds.

Liverpool ended a run of 11 games without a win after a battling 1-0 victory at rainy Southampton.

The game was settled by a 14th-minute goal from Emile Heskey - his first since September - as he headed home John Arne Riise's inswinging free-kick.

Saints sharpshooter James Beattie was kept quiet for much of the game and the Reds could have won by a greater margin if Michael Owen had not been off target with two glorious chances.

An overhead kick in the 85th minute from Youri Djorkaeff earned a vital point for Bolton as they drew 1-1 at Charlton to stay in 17th place. Mark Fish's first goal since April 2001 had looked to be enough to condemn Bolton to defeat.

Claus Jensen curled a free-kick into the box. Kevin Lisbie's header was parried by Jussi Jaaskelainen and Fish was on hand to score two minutes into the second half before Djorkaeff netted the leveller.

Sunderland slipped to a 2-1 defeat

FIXTURES

Tuesday 28 Jan, 2003

Middlesbrough v Aston Villa
Bolton Wanderers v Everton
Chelsea v Leeds United
Sunderland v Southampton

Wednesday 29 Jan, 2003

Man City v Fulham
Tottenham Hotspur v Newcastle United
West Ham Utd v Blackburn
Rovers
West Bromwich Albion v Charlton Athletic
Liverpool v Arsenal

Jlloyd Samuel of Aston Villa challenges Robbie Keane of Tottenham Hotspur.

at Everton to remain in the relegation zone.

The Toffees had the better of the first period but it was the Black Cats who drew first blood in the 34th minute when Kevin Phillips picked out Kevin Kilbane and the Republic of Ireland international fired across Richard Wright and into the net.

David Moyes' side came back thanks to a brace from American striker Brian McBride, who now has three goals in two games after joining on loan from Columbus Crew. McBride first met Scot Gemmill's cross with an overhead kick which took a deflection and found the corner in the 51st minute and six minutes later he raced clear to add a second.

There was no score at Elland Road, where rock-bottom West Brom held Leeds.

Scott Dobie fired narrowly wide 15 minutes in for the Baggies after a free-kick had been charged down by the Leeds defence. At the other end, Russell Hoult produced a wonderful save as he pushed an effort from Alan Smith wide of the post.

Gary Megson's team had to survive the last 15 minutes with 10 men after Andy Johnson was sent off for a second bookable offence.

Albion's neighbours Birmingham, who could still conceivably be sucked into the relegation battle, arrested their run of three defeats with a creditable 1-1 draw against Blackburn at Ewood Park.

Graeme Souness' side forged ahead in the 19th minute after Andy Cole's cutback eventually found its way to Damien Duff who despatched the ball into the net.

Rovers had to cope with 10 men in the second half after Andy Todd was sent off on the half hour for needlessly lashing out at Birmingham striker Christophe Dugarry and they were eventually made to pay when Stern John scored with seven minutes left. Teddy Sheringham grabbed the only goal as Tottenham beat Aston Villa 1-0 in the Midlands.

The veteran striker latched onto Stephen Carr's cross from the right with 21 minutes to go.

Thierry Henry struck his second hat-trick of the season to restore Arsenal's five-point Barclays Premiership lead - but West Ham still left Highbury with grievances aplenty after an incident-packed 3-1 derby defeat.

Henry put The Gunners ahead with a penalty after Steve Lomas had been harshly sent off for a foul on Robert Pires and the Frenchman restored his side's lead on 71 minutes after Jermain Defoe had earlier levelled.

In Sunday's other top-flight game Fulham picked up three vital points as Middlesbrough's travel sickness continued with a 1-0 defeat at Loftus Road.

Jean Tigana's men had the best of the first half and scored the decisive goal six minutes before half-time.

Sylvain Legwinski picked out Sean Davis running through the middle and the midfielder beat Mark Schwarzer with a well taken strike with the outside of his right foot.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Manchester U. 2 - 1 Chelsea, Aston Villa 0 - 1 Tottenham H., Blackburn R. 1 - 1 Birmingham C., Charlton Athletic 1 - 1 Bolton W., Everton 2 - 1 Sunderland, Leeds U. 0 - 0 West Bromwich A., Newcastle U. 2 - 0 Manchester C., Southampton 0 - 1 Liverpool, Arsenal 3 - 1 West Ham U., Fulham 1 - 0 Middlesbrough.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	24	16	4	4	52	25	52
Man Utd	24	14	5	5	38	22	47
Newcastle	23	13	5	7	39	27	42
Chelsea	24	11	8	5	41	24	41
Everton	24	11	6	7	30	29	39
Liverpool	24	10	8	6	32	23	38
Tottenham	24	11	5	8	35	34	38
Southampton	24	9	9	6	27	25	36
Blackburn	24	8	10	6	30	26	34
Man City	24	10	4	10	32	34	34
Leeds	24	9	4	11	31	29	31
Middlesbrough	24	8	6	10	27	24	30
Charlton	23	8	6	9	26	30	30
Aston Villa	24	8	5	11	22	25	29
Fulham	23	7	6	10	24	25	27
Birmingham	24	6	8	10	20	31	26
Bolton	23	4	9	10	24	38	21
Sunderland	24	4	7	13	16	31	19
West Brom	23	4	5	14	17	37	17
West Ham	23	3	8	12	24	43	17

FIRST DIVISION

Sheffield U. 3 - 1 Sheffield W., Brighton & Hove A. 1 - 1 Portsmouth, Crystal Palace 1 - 1 Burnley, Gillingham 3 - 2 Leicester C., Grimsby T. 0 - 2 Millwall, Ipswich T. 3 - 0 Preston North End, Nottingham F. 1 - 1 Coventry C., Reading 0 - 0 Walsall, Rotherham U. 3 - 2 Bradford C., Stoke C. 1 - 3 Derby County, Wolverhampton W. 1 - 1 Wimbledon, Watford 2 - 1 Norwich C.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portsmouth	29	17	9	3	56	29	60
Leicester	28	16	7	5	43	27	55
Sheff Utd	27	15	7	5	42	26	52
Notm Forest	28	12	8	8	43	28	44
Norwich	28	12	8	8	39	26	44
Coventry	29	11	10	8	36	32	43
Reading	27	13	4	10	28	24	43
Wolverhampton	28	11	9	8	45	30	42
Crystal Palace	28	10	12	6	42	30	42
Watford	29	12	6	11	35	45	42
Ipswich	28	11	8	9	44	34	41
Rotherham	29	11	8	10	48	39	41
Millwall	29	11	7	11	37	43	40
Gillingham	27	10	9	8	36	36	39
Derby	29	11	5	13	35	39	38
Barnley	28	10	8	10	41	50	38
Wimbledon	27	9	8	10	43	43	35
Preston	28	7	10	11	41	48	31
Walsall	29	8	6	15	40	46	30
Bradford	27	7	7	13	31	48	28
Grimsby	28	6	7	15	34	54	25
Stoke	29	5	9	15	32	52	24
Sheff Wed	29	5	8	16	27	48	23
Brighton	28	4	8	16	26	46	20

SECOND DIVISION

Chesterfield 1 - 2 Mansfield T., Barnsley 2 - 3 Luton T., Blackpool 2 - 1 Northampton T., Brentford 1 - 1 Notts County, Cardiff C. 2 - 1 Cheltenham, Crewe Alexandra 1 - 0 Huddersfield T., Peterborough U. 1 - 2 Port Vale, Plymouth Argyle 0 - 1 Queens Park R., Stockport County 2 - 5 Swindon T., Tranmere R. 1 - 1 Bristol C., Wigan Athletic 2 - 1 Colchester U., Wycombe W. 2 - 2 Oldham Athletic.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wigan	27	20	5	2	46	15	65
Oldham	28	15	9	4	44	22	54
Crewe	27	16	5	6	45	21	53
Cardiff	26	16	5	5	44	22	53
Bristol City	27	15	5	7	52	31	50
QPR	28	13	7	8	36	30	46
Luton	26	11	7	8	40	35	40
Blackpool	26	11	6	9	35	36	39
Tranmere	27	11	6	10	37	41	39
Brentford	26	10	7	9	32	30	37
Chesterfield	27	11	4	12	24	32	37
Plymouth	26	9	9	8	34	32	36
Wycombe	28	9	8	11	40	38	35
Swindon	27	9	7	11	37	40	34
Port Vale	26	8	6	12	31	40	30
Northampton	27	8	5	14	24	42	29
Stockport	27	8	4	15	36	46	28
Mansfield	27	8	4	15	43	59	28
Notts County	26	5	12	9	37	40	27
Peterborough	28	6	9	13	29	38	27
Colchester	27	6	9	12	28	39	27
Barnsley	27	7	6	14	31	44	27
Cheltenham	26	5	8	13	24	40	23
Huddersfield	27	5	7	15	19	35	22

Spanish Primera Liga

Atletico Madrid scored a last-gasp equaliser to draw a dramatic derby with Real Madrid 2-2.

Visitors Atletico were celebrating for the first time on eleven minutes when Roberto Carlos was penalised for a foul in the area, and Javi Moreno converted from the spot, and almost immediately afterwards Ivan Helguera was dismissed for a foul tackle.

However, the ten Madrid men regrouped, and Figo levelled on 33 minutes and scored his second from the spot just before half-time when Roberto Carlos himself was fouled.

Both sides were down to ten men just after the hour when Garcia Calvo was sent off for a second booking, but Figo had another penalty saved ten minutes from the end by Adrian Burgos - again after a foul on Roberto Carlos - and that proved a turning point as Atletico regrouped and levelled in the sixth minute of added time through Demetrio Albertini's free-kick. Second-placed Madrid are now three points behind leaders Real Sociedad. Deportivo La Coruna bounced back from last week's disappointing 3-1 defeat by Atletico Madrid to snatch a late 2-1 victory over Athletic Bilbao on Sunday.

Deportivo coach Javier Irureta was furious after his team folded in the second half against Atletico and there was



Xavi Hernandez of Barcelona (left) and Pablo Almar of Valencia battle for possession.

a lot more fight this week as they came back from Santiago Ezquerro's 48th-minute opener for Bilbao.

Brazilian defender Donato pulled the team back to level terms within two minutes before Albert Luque's 84th-minute corner flew straight in to make it 2-1 and keep Depor in fourth place in the Primera Liga.

Denilson scored a stoppage-time winner for Real Betis to put a blot on the CV of Racing Santander coach Manuel Preciado. A third consecutive defeat for Racing, leaving them just two points above the relegation zone, means Preciado's position is likely to be under scrutiny from Dimitri Piterman, who arrived as the new majority shareholder this week. For Betis the victory was a morale-boost after defeat to Primera Liga strugglers Recreativo Huelva in the Copa del Rey in midweek.

Australian striker John Aloisi scored three minutes from time to earn Osasuna a valuable point from a 1-1 draw against Alaves. Alaves seemed to be on course to get over their shock Copa del Rey defeat by second divi-

sion side Murcia when Adrian Ilie put them 1-0 up after 40 minutes. But Osasuna, perilously close to the relegation places and only a point behind Alaves, fought back and Aloisi's 87th-minute strike means they move a point further away from the drop zone.

Second-bottom Espanyol picked up a valuable point at the home of mid-table Villarreal. Javier Clemente's side were unable to match last weekend's 3-0 win over Racing Santander. But at least they seemed to have plugged the leaks in their defence, having achieved three clean sheets in four games after this 0-0 draw.

Valladolid sent struggling Rayo Vallecano to their third consecutive home defeat at the Vallecas Stadium. Oscar Gonzalez gave the visitors the lead in the ninth minute. And the Rayo side did not have enough to prevent Valladolid from claiming their third away victory of the season on a ground where they have tasted defeat on their last three visits. Sevilla and Malaga fought out a goalless draw in their Andalusian derby.

Both teams had their chances but were unable to grab the crucial first goal which may have opened up the game as a contest.

But with both sides' primary aim to avoid defeat a draw always looked possible. A late penalty converted by Walter Pandiani and awarded in doubtful circumstances earned Real Mallorca a point from a 1-1 draw and denied Recreativo Huelva the third win of their season.

With the Primera Liga basement side rapidly losing touch with the rest of the division, Raul Molina had put Recreativo ahead in the 55th minute.

But Pandiani levelled from the spot 10 minutes from the end after Mariano Pernia was adjudged to have brought down Alvaro Novo. Louis van Gaal was left clinging to his job on Saturday night as his Barcelona side were heavily beaten 4-2 at home by a Valencia side who played the entire second half with 10 men.

The visitors started well and capitalised on a defensive error to move in front after 12 minutes - Pablo Aimar grabbing the goal. The boos around the Nou Camp reached deafening proportions 13 minutes later when John Carew rose unchallenged

to head home a corner. Barca pulled one back through Thiago Motta after 38 minutes and they appeared to be in with a chance when Valencia's Spanish international goalkeeper Santiago Canizares was sent off for serious foul play four minutes before the break.

The hosts laid siege to the Valencia goal during the second half but were hit by two late sucker punches.

Fabio Aurelio made it 3-1 and then Francisco Rufete added a fourth three minutes from the end.

Patrick Kluivert pulled one back for Barca in injury time but it was too little too late.

Meanwhile at the top of the table Real Sociedad took their unbeaten run to 18 games with a 1-0 victory over injury-hit Celta Vigo.

The win puts them four points clear at the top of the Primera Liga and all but extinguished Celta's title hopes.

The match remained goalless going into the break and the winner eventually came from Francisco De.

SPANISH FIXTURES SATURDAY 26, JANUARY 2003

Athletic v R.Madrid
At.Madrid v R.Sociedad
Celta v Barcelona
Espanyol v Deportivo
Osasuna v Racing
Valencia v Sevilla
Malaga v Mallorca
Rec de Huelva v R.Vallecano
Betis v Villarreal
Valladolid v Alaves

Real Sociedad 1 - 0 Celta de Vigo, Barcelona 2 - 4 Valencia, Sevilla 0 - 0 Malaga, Deportivo Alaves 1 - 1 Osasuna, Deportivo La Coruna 2 - 1 Athletic Bilbao, Mallorca 1 - 1 Recreativo Huelva, Racing Santander 0 - 1 Real Betis, Rayo Vallecano 0 - 1 Valladolid, Villarreal 0 - 0 Espanyol, Real Madrid 2 - 2 Atletico Madrid.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Sociedad	18	11	7	0	34	20	40
Real Madrid	18	10	7	1	39	18	37
D Coruna	18	9	5	4	26	21	32
Valencia	18	9	5	4	31	16	32
Real Betis	18	8	6	4	29	21	30
Celta Vigo	18	8	3	7	20	18	27
Mallorca	18	8	3	7	24	31	27
Atletico Madrid	18	6	7	5	28	24	25
Valladolid	18	7	3	8	18	19	24
Barcelona	18	6	5	7	27	23	23
Villarreal	18	5	7	6	19	21	22
Sevilla	18	5	7	6	15	14	22
Malaga	18	4	9	5	22	24	21
Athletic Bilbao	18	6	3	9	26	34	21
CD Alaves	18	5	6	7	22	29	21
Racing Santander	18	6	2	10	20	24	20
Osasuna	18	5	5	8	19	24	20
Rayo Vallecano	18	5	3	10	18	26	18
Espanyol	18	5	2	11	19	28	17
Recreativo Huelva	18	2	5	11	14	35	11

Ethniki Katigoria

Panathinaikos moved back to the top of the table after a 3-1 win at Akrotiris on Sunday. They were forced to do it the hard way, falling behind to a sixth-minute strike from Stathis Stefanidis before hitting the hosts with three goals in 10 first-half minutes.

Jan Michaelsen began the comeback in the 14th minute before Nikos Liberopoulos (22) and a Nikos Messerdis own goal completed the scoring.

That left the visitors two points clear of PAOK and Olympiakos, who failed to go level with their great rivals after a disappointing 1-1 draw at home to Xanthi.

Stelios Yfannakopoulos looked to have nicked the winner when he netted in the 73rd minute but Stelios Sfakianakis stunned the home support with the leveller three minutes from time.

AEK Athens missed the chance to close the gap on the leading pack after they could only manage a 1-1 draw at Panionios.

Dimitris Nalitzis had put AEK ahead as early as the sixth minute but Vangelis Mantzios earned the hosts a point in the 68th minute.

A double strike from Kostas Kiassos helped OFI Crete to a 2-1 home win

against Kallithea.

Kiassos found the net after 42 and 72 minutes to put his side in command before Yorgos Savvidis hit a consolation 14 minutes from time.

Iraklis had a more comfortable afternoon after beating city rivals Aris 4-0.

Goals from Takis Gonas (12), Akis Stolidis (32), Marcin Miecziel (44) and Akis Stolidis (72) won the game.

Elsewhere, bottom club Panachaiki and struggling Ionikos played out a goalless draw.

Egaleo Athens 1 - 0 Proodeftiki, PAOK Saloniki 1 - 0 Giannina, OFI Crete 2 - 1 Kallithea, Iraklis Saloniki 4 - 0 Aris Saloniki, Olympiakos Piraeus 1 - 1 Xanthi Skoda, Panachaiki Patras 0 - 0 Ionikos Nikea, Akrotiris 1 - 3 Panathinaikos, Panionios 1 - 1 AEK Athens.

Team	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
1 Panathinaikos	15	10	2	3	21	11	32
2 Olympiakos	15	8	6	1	33	9	30
3 PAOK	15	9	3	3	35	18	30
4 AEK	15	7	5	3	27	14	26
5 Aris	15	7	4	4	17	17	25
6 Panionios	15	7	4	4	17	11	25
7 Iraklis	15	7	3	5	20	14	24
8 Xanthi	15	5	8	2	18	11	23
9 Proodeftiki	15	5	6	4	16	13	21
10 Egaleo	15	4	7	4	11	17	19
11 OFI	15	4	6	5	17	17	18
12 Kallithea	15	3	5	7	12	17	14
13 Ionikos	15	2	5	8	8	24	11
14 Giannina	15	2	5	8	12	19	11
15 Akrotiris	15	2	2	11	10	30	8
16 Panachaiki	15	1	3	11	5	37	6



Jan Michaelsen scored in PAO's victory on the weekend.

FIXTURES

Saturday 26, January 2003

Iraklis v Panachaiki
Olympiakos v OFI
Panionios v Aris
Akrotiris v Kallithea
Egaleo v Ionikos
PAOK v Xanthi
Giannina v AEK
Proodeftiki v Panathinaikos



FIFA WORLD RANKINGS

Rank:	Team	Points:
1.	Brazil	856
2.	France	787
3.	Spain	780
4.	Germany	765
5.	Argentina	750
6.	Netherlands	746
7.	Turkey	736
8.	England	734
9.	Mexico	732
10.	United States	723
11.	Portugal	710
12.	Denmark	707
13.	Italy	705
14.	Ireland Republic	697
15.	Czech Republic	687
16.	Belgium	686
17.	Cameroon	684
18.	Paraguay	679
19.	Yugoslavia	677
20.	Korea Republic	669
21.	Costa Rica	651
22.	Japan	650
22.	Russia	650
24.	Sweden	649
25.	Norway	648
25.	Romania	648
27.	Senegal	647
28.	Uruguay	643
29.	Nigeria	642
30.	South Africa	636
31.	Ecuador	634
32.	Croatia	629
33.	Poland	628
34.	Iran	627
35.	Morocco	623
36.	Slovenia	620
37.	Colombia	617
38.	Saudi Arabia	612
39.	Egypt	596
40.	Honduras	591
41.	Tunisia	586
42.	Bulgaria	582
43.	Finland	580
44.	Switzerland	576
45.	Ukraine	574
46.	Israel	568
47.	Trinidad and Tobago	566
48.	Greece	563
49.	New Zealand	562
50.	Australia	557
51.	Jamaica	555
52.	Iraq	554
52.	Wales	554
54.	Thailand	545
55.	Austria	541
56.	Slovakia	535
57.	Zimbabwe	533
58.	Hungary	532
59.	Ghana	529
60.	Scotland	528

The next FIFA World Ranking will be published on 19 February 2003.

French Ligue 1

Lens boosted their hopes of clinching a European place by thrashing struggling Sedan 4-0 on Saturday night.

The home side, who started the day in mid-table, moved up to ninth after a wonderful display at the Stade Felix-Bollaert.

Daniel Moreira gave them the lead after 21 minutes and further first period goals from John Utaka and Seydou Keita finished the contest before the halfway mark.

Antoine Sibierski added a fourth for Lens in the final minute.

Montpellier followed up their 2-2 draw against Nice to take

an equally important point against Auxerre.

The south-coast side held on for a goalless draw at the Stade La Mosson to put some daylight between themselves and rock-bottom Troyes.

Auxerre went into the match hoping to close the gap on Nice and Marseille but had to settle for just a point.

Le Havre wasted a wonderful chance to move out of the bottom three as they could only manage a 1-1 home draw against Strasbourg.

The hosts had to come from behind to get even a point after Pierre Laurent gave the visitors a 21st-minute lead.

But Pascal Chimbona restored parity six minutes into the

second half to leave Le Havre 18th in the Ligue 1 table.



Serge Blanc (left) of Montpellier challenges Auxerre's Arnaud Gonzalez.

Le Havre 1 - 1 Strasbourg, Lens 4 - 0 Sedan, Montpellier 0 - 0 Auxerre

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nice	22	10	8	4	28	16	38
Marseille	22	11	5	6	23	20	38
Lyon	22	10	6	6	37	27	36
Auxerre	21	10	6	5	22	17	36
Monaco	22	9	8	5	32	20	35
Sochaux	21	9	7	5	23	14	34
Guingamp	22	10	4	8	32	28	34
PSG	22	8	8	6	30	21	32
Lens	21	8	7	6	22	19	31
Bordeaux	21	8	6	7	26	20	30
Nantes	20	8	4	8	23	24	28
Bastia	22	8	4	10	23	28	28
Lille	21	7	7	7	20	26	28
Strasbourg	21	7	7	7	24	31	28
Rennes	22	7	5	10	21	25	26
Sedan	21	6	6	9	23	30	24
AC Ajaccio	22	4	8	10	17	28	20
Le Havre	22	4	8	10	15	26	20
Montpellier	22	3	9	10	19	31	18
Troyes	21	3	7	11	14	23	-

Alain's Corner

Marseille
dream-
ing!!!

At the beginning of Round Twenty-three on Tuesday, Auxerre and Marseille played their game in advance for television rights.

The rest of this round will be played on Wednesday and with some good opposition as Niza comes up against Paris Saint Germain and Lyon meets with Sochaux. Auxerre, the only French team to qualify in the UEFA Cup, may take control of the league if they beat Marseille on Tuesday.

Even though they are a very young side, Auxerre have revealed their great potential. The team has their top striker, "\$85 Million Man" Djibril Cisse.

He who has scored 14 goals so far and who has Manchester United, Arsenal, Liverpool, Juventus, Roma, Barcelona and Real Madrid all trying to seduce him to join their dream team squad this year.

All have received a straight and polite "No" from Manager, Guy Roux. He needs Cisse for the French League this year but would be open for discussion next summer. Cisse, who dreams of a second crown for Top Scorer of the French League will have to deal with Pauleta who finished equal with him last year.

It looks like Kaba Diawara of Nice will try to unravel the great duo. Diawara, who scored against Lille last week, scored against Montpellier once again and he will have his word to say in the battle of Best Scorer.

Ronaldinho, Brazilian World Champion, received a proposition from Inter Milan but Paris declined the deal which means Ronnie will have to stay six months more with his current club.

On Tuesday, the French League will have its eyes on Marseille at the game of the week, Olympique Marseille versus Auxerre.

Thirty thousand supporters will be witness to the show starring the best attacking team Auxerre and France's favourite club Marseille.

Playing in Auxerre Stadium with all the supporters rooting for their home team for ninety minutes, Auxerre and her fantastic attack may be in danger especially as Marseille loves a big game and always gives its best for its fantastic supporters.

Marseille, the club that everyone adores even with all the controversial stories that could come straight off the screens of Hollywood, is the most successful club ever in France and the only French club to win the Champions League in 1993.

It played the UEFA Cup final three years ago against Parma, played in the Champions League the year after that and since then - nothing.

"Marseillais", make us dream again.

But today with Marseille on top of the league equal with Niza, trashing Creteil Four-nil in the French League this week-end, and as well qualify in the French Cup for a top game against Paris next Saturday, Marseille is back and in Marseille City everybody are dreaming again.

Marseille Russian new signing Sytchev part of the Russian squad for the World Cup 2002 have made a great start for his new club showing as nineteen years old he is maybe the new Mickael Owens.

Sytchev have scored his first goal on Saturday against Creteil, and have prove to his coach that he have made the right choice to signed him as the only new player than Marseille will take during the Mercato.

Next weekend the French are back with an explosive Paris-Saint-Germain against Marseille to watch.

See you next week.



Injured Crespo out for two months

Striker Hernan Crespo will miss two months of the Serie A season after injuring his right thigh in the weekend fixture at home to Modena, Inter Milan spokesman Giuseppe Sapienza told AFP.

"Following Tuesday's examination we expect him to be out for two months, no more," he said.

"We hope he will return sooner, but that depends on how quickly he responds to treatment."

Earlier Wednesday Crespo, an Argentina international, limped into Inter's training ground at Appiano Gentile for further assessment of his injury.

The former Lazio forward was stretchered off in agony after 30 minutes of Sunday's 2-0 win at the San Siro.

He fell awkwardly trying to make contact with a cross from Uruguayan Alvaro Recoba.

Crespo, who has been in sparkling form this season, will undergo further examinations this week," Sapienza added.



Hernan Crespo: Sidelined until April.

Juanfran in the frame

Blackburn have confirmed their interest in Celta Vigo defender Juanfran as Graeme Souness continues his search for a new left-back.

Souness failed in his attempts to lure Belgium international Philippe Leonard to Ewood Park last week and Rovers have now stepped up their search, with Juanfran thought to be the new number one target.

Rovers thought better of a move for the Spanish international a fortnight ago after considering the financial burden too great but the suggestion is that a deal is back on and talks are ongoing.

Chief executive John Williams confirmed that Juanfran is one player attracting the interest of Souness but stressed that no deal is imminent.

"We are currently pursuing a number of left-backs and Juanfran

Garcia is one of the names in the frame," Williams told the Lancashire Evening Telegraph.

Rovers are believed to be battling it out with Portuguese outfit Benfica to sign Juanfran on loan, but it is thought the player's personal demands could still price Rovers out of a deal.



Juanfran: Top of Rovers' wanted list.

Fink keen to stay at Bayern

Bayern Munich veteran Thorsten Fink looks set to stay with the club after his current contract runs out in the summer.

Fink had been widely linked with a move elsewhere in the Bundesliga when his Bayern contract ends, but the former Germany international has revealed that he has been offered another role with Munich.

He said: "Uli Hoeness [Bayern general manager] has offered me a job as a sort of standby first-teamer. It would involve playing for the reserves in the third division, and helping the first team out as necessary."

"The general manager and I have talked about a future role at the club, we've yet to discuss the details, but it's likely to be as a coach in the youth section. That's the broad framework, but as I've said, we've not talked about details yet. There's plenty of time."

Fink admitted that his long-term aim was to become a coach and that he was now unlikely to leave Bayern for

another club in a playing capacity.

He added: "I would relish the challenge of using my experience to bring on an ambitious, young side. But the coach would have a tough job talking me into it, as I really can't imagine moving on at the current time. And when you take the financial aspect into consideration, I really can't see it."



Thorsten Fink: Looks set to end his career at Bayern.

Kluivert would welcome JFH

Patrick Kluivert believes he could play with rumoured Barca target Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink and scoffed at talk linking him with a move to Old Trafford.

Kluivert said in a press conference: "He [Hasselbaink] is a great striker and a very good player."

"I believe we are compatible and we can play together. We have already done so in the Dutch team."

The Chelsea striker has been persistently linked with Barca in the past month and coach Louis



Patrick Kluivert: Interested in a strike partnership with Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink.

Van Gaal has suggested he is interested.

However, according to Catalan sports newspaper El Mundo Deportivo, Barca are only willing to pay a maximum of 12 million euros (\$A22million).

Kluivert also stated his "surprise" at the reported interest of English Premiership club Manchester United in acquiring his services.

"I don't know anything," he said.

El Mundo Deportivo ran a front-page story on Wednesday claiming Sir Alex Ferguson is on the trail of Barca's number nine.

Moreover, Kluivert's agent Sigi Lens has reportedly been seen in Manchester.

Kluivert though pointed out that Lens is also the agent for other players, including current teammate Michael Reiziger, who has been in talks with Manchester City.

"I have said it many times that I am very happy in Barcelona and I have no intention of changing teams," Kluivert stressed.

Charlton's pitch battle

Charlton Athletic have asked the Premier League to authorise a replay of Saturday's 4-1 Premiership defeat at Chelsea which was played on a heavily sanded pitch.

Chelsea manager Claudio Ranieri described the Stamford Bridge surface as a "beach" and Charlton chief executive Peter Varney, who had already notified the league of his concerns, today asked for the game to be replayed on grass.

He said in a statement: "Following discussions with our manager and players, and based on evidence before us and information provided by Chelsea officials, we have reached the conclusion that in the interests of the integrity of the Premier League and sportsmanship, we must lodge a formal complaint to the Premier League regarding Saturday's match."

"In the light of the evidence available, we are requesting that the match be replayed on a grass surface."

Charlton's complaint centres on

information passed to them by a Chelsea official, who said the match was played on the base upon which a new pitch was to be laid on Monday and yesterday.

Varney added: "We were not offered an opportunity for our players to train on the artificial surface to judge the effect of the bounce of the ball, which in our opinion video evidence will show was different to a normal grass surface, and to make decisions on the appropriate footwear to be worn."

Chelsea officials advise us that the Chelsea players trained on the pitch on Thursday and Friday of last week, and at last Saturday's match the footwear worn by their players was appropriate for an artificial surface."

Chelsea issued a statement in response which said: "The referee and match officials carried out an inspection of the pitch before the game. Their decision was that the surface was in a satisfactory condition for the match to be played."

KLEBERSON READY TO SAY 'I DO'

Leeds United are to start negotiations with £4m-rated Kleberston after the Brazilian's 15-year-old bride-to-be agreed to his marriage proposal.

With Leeds due to receive £7m for Robbie Fowler following his move to Manchester City, the deal has finally paved the way for boss Terry Venables to sign his number one target.

A Leeds official is due to meet with Kleberston's representative, Marcel Figer, to thrash out terms on a four-and-a-half year deal, with Venables looking to strengthen his midfield following the recent departures of Lee Bowyer and Olivier Dacourt.

Venables has been eager to sign the Atletico Paranaense star, with Kleberston's club desperate for the money as they are struggling financially, after watching the player shine for Brazil during the World Cup.

Kleberston has also stated his desire to play in the Premiership, however, in proving romance is still alive, he was not prepared to leave his homeland unless girlfriend Dayane Wilians Da Silva said 'yes' to marriage.

The 23-year-old is now due to wed on Valentine's Day when Miss Da Silva turns 16, with the teenager confirming: "He told me he would not travel without me unless I agreed to marry him - I accepted within the hour."

Venables also now looks set to pursue another long-time target in Argentine defender Gabriel Milito, as well as Birmingham's Australia winger Stan Lazaridis, who is out of contract in the summer.

Whether any of the deals — in particular Kleberston — can be concluded ahead of this Saturday's Elland Road clash with West Brom, remains to be seen.

Petit to keep flying French flag until 2004

Emmanuel Petit has set his sights on staying in the France national selection at least until the 2004 European Championship finals in Portugal.

The 32-year-old Chelsea midfielder says he has no intention of retiring, despite being stung by the criticism he received after France's failed defence of their World Cup crown in Japan and South Korea last summer.

"There were an awful lot of bad things written and said about me in France after the World Cup," said Petit, who scored France's third goal in the 3-0 win over Brazil in the 1998 World Cup final.

"I could not really understand this. I have thought a lot about it and I cannot think of one time in all the games I have played for France where my performance has sucked."

"I'll see how it goes. But at the moment, it



Emmanuel Petit: Targeting national team selection until 2004.

is in my mind to play for France through to the Euro 2004 Championships," added Petit, who was a member of the team that won the Euro 2000 title.

Spurs still in for Morientes

Tottenham manager Glenn Hoddle could launch a third attempt to sign Real Madrid striker Fernando Morientes at the end of the season.

Agent Colin Gordon, who acted for Spurs in their two failed swoops for the 26-year-old Spain international in August and last week, has

revealed Morientes may be available at the conclusion of Real's Primera Liga campaign.

Gordon spoke out after Bolton chairman Phil Gartside told his Spurs counterpart Daniel Levy that he has no chance of luring Michael Ricketts to White Hart Lane with a player-plus-cash deal.

That is what Hoddle is

reported to have offered for the forward but Gartside insisted: "We don't want any exchange players."

"Unless the money's right we won't sell anyone, and Michael would cost more than £6million."

Spurs' move for Morientes collapsed last week because they only offered a loan deal.



Fernando Morientes: Once again the target of Tottenham Hotspur.

Gordon has now disclosed Hoddle could offer Morientes a permanent contract in the summer when there would be more money available at White Hart Lane if his team have qualified for Europe.

OLYMPIAKOS LET GO OF DUO

Greek powerhouse Olympiakos Piraeus have terminated the contract of released Uruguayan international striker Gabriel Alves.

Olympiakos released the 28-year-old after becoming fed up with his failure to rekindle the goal-scoring form that had earned him a transfer to the Greek capital from Club

Nacional in July 2000.

Far from setting the Alpha Ethniki scoring charts ablaze, Alves managed just three goals in 18 appearances over the course of two and a half seasons.

In related news, the Piraeus side also annulled the contract of under-utilized defender Christos Kontis.



NATIONAL LEAGUE ACTION BETWEEN NORTHERN SPIRIT vs SYDNEY UNITED

